Dark of the Moon

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Dark of the Moon

by beforethedawn, ConstructFairytales, Destinyawakened

Summary

Will befriends what seems to be a lonely wolf, but his investigations into recent killings bring him to believe his new friend might just be behind it.

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A wolf. The man, Will Graham, lowered his gun just a notch, watching the animal who didn't seem to want to attack him or his dogs. He shot off a warning round just in case, away from the beautiful beast. He didn't want to hurt it, just get him away from his house.

In response to the gun blast, the wolf merely blinked, and tilted his head at Will, appearing nearly amused. He laid down, with poise, making it clear that he was not about to charge the house, not about to attack. It seemed that the magnificent looking wolf was merely curious.

Notes

1) As always, not beta'd and edited lightly over by us.
2) This is not your typical werewolf story. This is a bit of our sort of thing and taking from all sorts of werewolf stories, etc.
3) Like what you see? Please follow us on TUMBLR!

Chapter 1

Twigs crunched under the wolf's enormous paws as he followed the bank of the stream through the woods under the pearly brightness of the moon overhead. He skimmed his black nose against the indentation of boot-prints in the soft earth near the water, and inhaled.

They were fresh, as were the many tracks made by dog paws around it. The tracks led through the woods, along a narrow, barely visible path only ever used by one human who laid his scent down here over and over, saturating the earth with it. Even without the light of the moon, the mingling smells of coffee grounds, whiskey, and the sting of drugstore aftershave would have laid out the path to the house like a red ribbon for the wolf's remarkable nose to follow.

The path was not long, and the smell of dogs and the human became clearer and stronger with every step. Finally, there it was, the house: painted white, and lit up gold from within in the dark, like an oasis of domesticity in the middle of the wilderness.

The wolf sat at the edge of the woods, took a deep breath of the air, and watched as a figure moved in the windows.

From inside a dog barked, able to smell the wolf. Growls sounded from behind the screen, and whimpers as one dog begged to be let out to go sniff out the newcomer. The wolf tilted his head at the sound of a human voice that followed the dog's howling, hushing him as he barked louder. The figure that moved along inside shooed the dog back.

"Buster, stay." The man scooted the dog out of the way, rifle in hand, and stepped out onto the porch, shutting the door behind him. "Hello?" The gun was lifted to his shoulder, aimed toward the forest, sea blue eyes scanning the distance.

The wolf sniffed the air when Will stepped out on his porch, and blinked stunningly bright amber eyes at the human, watching him with interest before he moved, walking into the man's view, presenting himself with regal calm. The wolf was tawny with streaks of grey in his fur, and very, very large, with a gracefully constructed head held with an almost regal demeanor.

A wolf. The man, Will Graham, lowered his gun just a notch, watching the animal who didn't seem to want to attack him or his dogs. He shot off a warning round just in case, away from the beautiful beast. He didn't want to hurt it, just get him away from his house.

In response to the gun blast, the wolf merely blinked, and tilted his head at Will, appearing nearly amused. He laid down, with poise, making it clear that he was not about to charge the house, not about to attack. It seemed that the magnificent looking wolf was merely curious.

Behind Will, Buster barked, sharply, and jumped up against the screen door over and over, growling.

“Buster!” Will snapped, and moved back to shut the door completely. He stepped down off the porch, toward the edge of the forest, gun slack in one hand as he approached the wolf with caution.

The wolf stayed still as Will approached, paws lying neatly on the ground in front of him, nearly as big as tea-cup saucers. He blinked gold eyes slowly, letting Will get closer and closer as he was able to smell him more and more clearly. He could smell the fish Will gutted earlier, the whiskey lingering on his palm from the drink he had, cheap soap, and a little sweat. It was strangely exquisite.

“You’re new,” Will said, quietly, mostly to himself, getting a better look at the handsome wolf. He’d never seen this one around, there were quite a few in the area, and most never bothered to come near the house. “And bold.” Will, testingly, put his hand out, for the wolf to sniff, well aware of the dangers.

The wolf was much larger than the others, in every sense. He lifted his head, and closed his eyes as he smelled Will’s hand, as though in bliss as his sensitive nose picked up everything from Will’s skin: his mood, hormones rushing under his skin, his lack of fear, his wonder. Will thought he was *beautiful,* he wasn’t afraid at all.

Gently, Will let his fingers brush wet nose, up and over the bridge of his snout, through thick fur at behind his ears. He wondered if the wolf were lost, or perhaps domesticated by someone else. At any rate, he could hardly *keep* a wolf, not with the likes of Buster.

The wolf closed his eyes, and let Will stroke his fingers through the beautifully thick, soft fur near his ears with a heavy sigh, then nudged his cheek against Will’s forearm, nuzzling him, happily.

Will chuckled, in spite of himself. “You’re not someone’s pet, no collar, too big. But you do look taken care of…” Will brushed his palm down the back of the wolf’s head, sleek and soft, well taken care of.

The wolf heaved another heavy sigh, and almost seemed to smile as he relaxed under Will’s touch, strangely affectionate for a wild, majestic thing. He pressed his nose against Will’s shirt, and took a deep breath. He could smell blood, smell Will’s beating heart, and his instinct was to tear it out, to eat it whole … but he could not have his proverbial cake, and eat him, too.

“Lonely?” Will asked, all but hugging the wolf now as he nuzzled in closer. Will was alone, but never lonely, as he had his dogs.

The wolf let out a little huff at the question, and pressed his head against Will’s chest in reply. Will’s t-shirt was thin, and smelled like his skin. The wolf seemed to want to melt against him, as Will petted his fur. Birds began to chirp. Dawn was near.

Will set the gun down beside him, and wrapped the wolf in a light hug, petting his fur, wondering once the wolf left if he would see him again at all. Likely not. Will had hardly slept, up all night, nightmares, but that wasn’t anything new. He had work, a class to teach in a few hours.

The wolf rested his face near Will's as he was hugged, leaning into him with utter bliss, long tail wagging softly as he felt the brief moment of being accepted and cherished by gentle, curly-haired man. The birds chirping grew louder, but the wolf didn't move, not yet.

Will chuckled again and squeezed the wolf lightly. The sun was starting to rise, cascading orange hues across the sky. He had only a few hours before he had to drive to work. Finally, he stood, and picked up his gun. If the wolf followed, he'd figure something out, if not, well…

The wolf watched Will. Now that he was standing near him, it was clear how enormous he was. The wolf's head came up to Will's bellybutton where the wolf gave Will another nuzzle, head against the soft, vulnerable part of him for a moment before he stepped back, then looked at the dogs that watched from the house, and back at Will. Finally, the wolf trotted back into the cover of the woods, tail down.

Will looked over his shoulder as he went to leave, and waved but the wolf was gone. Will trotted back inside, and started his morning routine. He fed the dogs, showered, gathered his stuff for class, and packed it all away into his satchel. He grabbed his thermos for coffee, and piled into his Volvo for a long drive to Quantico.

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Will made no eye contact with any one of his students, he merely looked out at the crowd of trainees and taught what he knew best, and that was deciphering the evidence. Of course, Will was much better at it with his overactive imagination, among other things.

He stayed out of the light for a reason, to keep everything to himself.

Well, that was until Jack Crawford of the FBI walked into his classroom that afternoon and asked for him specifically, and to borrow his imagination. Agreeing, Will met Crawford outside of Baltimore town limits, where they hiked down a heavily wooded area, where a man had been found, brutally murdered, torn to shreds, like a large animal had gotten ahold of him.

"There's nothing on him, no DNA that the lab can pull off. Clean."

"Ever think it's just an animal attack, Agent Crawford?" Will asked, taking a look at the remains, though there wasn't much left. "A bear maybe? They're very territorial."

"Legend has it, a werewolf runs these parts," Beverly Katz said from beside Will, one of the lab technicians who worked with Jack.

"Werewolves?" Will asked, knitting his brows together.

"Were *wolf* ," Beverly corrected, arms crossed over her chest as they looked down at the body.

"Those are fictional," Will sighed, rubbing his forehead, starting to get a headache he couldn't shake.

“Yeah, but people like to cosplay and dress up as characters and animals. Could be one of those,” she said, and Will gave her a sidelong glance.

Jack watched Will interact with Bev, and folded his arms over his broad chest as he looked down at the tattered, grisly remains. “There were three just like this last month, at the same time of the month, on the other side of the city. The month before that, two people dragged out of a car and torn to pieces, this time inside the city limits. Odd pattern for an animal, don’t you think?”

Will huffed, arms over his chest, peering at them both from behind thick lenses. “We don’t even know if they’re related. Lots of animals react violently on full moons.”

“Yeah, so do people,” Bev added.

“There’s no empirical evidence of that,” Jimmy said as he walked closer, and looked Will over before he crouched and started taking tissue samples with forceps to place in small containers. “The whole full moon thing is a big old excuse for drunks to act up, I should know…” he sighed.

“And animals?” Will queried as he looked over at the other lab agent.

“All I know about is cats, I’m a cat person,” Jimmy said as he took more samples from the human wreckage. “Snowball, Minxy, and Gremlin, they’re *adorable,”* he said with a smile and showed Will pictures from his phone like a proud dad. “And they don’t judge me.”

“Are you talking about your cats again?” a dark haired man asked Jimmy Price as he carried a case to the scene. “Hey, Brian Zeller,” he said, introducing himself with a touch of arrogance to Will, then looked at Jack. “What do we have here?” he asked Jack, who ignored him and walked to Will, taking him aside.

“Do you work better alone? I can clear the scene…” Jack offered.

Trying his best to get into the right headspace, Will nodded. “It would be helpful if I had at least five minutes alone, ten would be best. Please.”

“Alright, come see me when you’re done, I’ll be at my office,” Jack said, and waved his hands at the techs. “Alright, clear out. Mr. Graham has to work,” Jack boomed at which Jimmy looked eager for a coffee, Zeller looked annoyed, and Bev just shrugged and walked off. “Take your time, Will,” Jack told the sensitive profiler, and left him with the body.

The scene was finally cleared, just Will and the body. He took off his glasses and folded them, putting them into his breast pocket as he closed his eyes. The pendulum swung three times, and Will was tracing the steps mentally backwards, right to the beginning again.

"I'm hungry, starved, the urge only comes once a month, surely no one will notice this one is missing... I approach with a kind stare, to get his attention. The jogger stops to try and pet. I bite off his fingers first, three at a time, and then two. I then tear into his jugular, ripping out his throat, and continue to eat all his organs, in a vicious rhapsody. He is utterly devoured, nothing to be done about that. It’s the least he deserves..."

Will shook his head, to clear his mind of it, foggy feeling, as he always was after stepping into the shoes of another. "It's an animal. Dog-like, a wolf most likely," he called out to whomever is close enough to hear him.

“Who’s holding the leash?” Jack called over. “A wolf doesn’t space out attacks a month apart. A wolf doesn’t go from one side of a major city to another, do they? They have a territory, they guard it. I’ve already talked to the animal experts. I need a human expert.”

Will gave Bev a look, but she was talking to the other two. He didn’t want to agree with her, but evidence was stacking up. Even still, the supernatural wouldn’t hold for the FBI or anyone else for that matter. “ *If* someone were to capture and teach a wolf to do this, then yes that person would be very dangerous. But there is *no* sign of any other human contact with this man. It’ll be hard to pin down with how many people jog through here daily.”

Jack walked closer, starting to lose patience with Will’s lack of results. “I need to know how he’s choosing them. Who would train a wolf to do this? Is this random? Why every month? Paint me a *picture* , Will.”

Having only glanced the other files over before being dumped onto this one, Will knew he was going to have to make some leaps, suggestions that would hopefully pan out. “Someone who doesn’t think it’s wrong, who… thinks some people deserved to be picked off. The natural food chain cycle, only here the wolf is the at the top. If someone is leading this animal, it’s someone who has very high ethical standards.”

“Someone … educated? This isn’t sexually driven, or sadistic? He thinks his wolf is here to … thin out the herd? Cull the unworthy?” Jack asked, walking a little closer.

“The.. *unsavory* ,” Will said, aware of the pun, but it had to be done. “Educated, yes.”

“So this isn’t … random?” Jack asked Will, shifting his jaw as he folded his arms over his chest again.

“I’m going to go with no. The other cases I glanced over, the victims had hardly any family, professions that weren’t always nice. I notice most of them, the people you did interview had nothing nice to say. Why not weed them out?” Will slipped his glasses back on. “It’s only happening once a month. Plenty of time to find the victims.”

“It’s still murder,” Jack said with a set jaw. “Where should we start?”

“Where was the first murder? Track them. Likely the first was pretty far from home, he’s circling back, closer to where he lives. It’s classic for murders, and getting comfortable--bolder,” Will explained, arms slack at his sides, head canted.

“We’ll take another look at the locations. Come back to my office, Will, there’s someone I’d like you to meet,” Jack said over his shoulder, on the way to his car after waving the techs back into the scene.

“Your office?” Will asked but Jack was already driving away. Will got into his own car and drove *back* to Quantico. Once there, he found Jack’s office, giving it a knock.

“Come in,” Jack called. Inside Jack Crawford’s office, another man sat in a chair. He was tall, slender, and amber-eyed with greying tawny hair that was swept back neatly from his remarkable face. “Will Graham, this is Hannibal Lecter. Sorry, *Doctor* Hannibal Lecter.”

Not thinking much of it, Will nodded to the doctor and took a seat in the free chair next to him. “Is he working on the case too?”

The doctor stared at Will, for a long moment, and took a deep breath before he sipped the coffee that he seemed to have forgotten he was holding in his hand. “In a manner of speaking, I suppose I’m assisting,” the doctor spoke, in a European accent that made his words smooth, and melodic. “Tell me then, how many confessions?” he asked.

“Twelve,” Jack sighed, “none of them with any detail, until someone leaked a set of photos of one of the scenes to Tattle Crime, that is.”

Will took the mug of coffee that had been meant for him and sipped some of it, shaking his head. “Tasteless.”

“Do you often have trouble with taste?” Hannibal asked, over his cup of coffee, warm eyes sparkling a little at Will. Blood rushed beneath the smooth surface of his skin, flushing it.

“My *thoughts* are not often tasty,” Will retorted, mostly looking down into his steaming cup of coffee as the banter between him and the doctor picked up.

Hannibal ran his tongue over the sharp edges of his teeth, and looked Will over again. “Nor mine. No effective barriers,” he said, able to feel the air between them crackling.

Will scoffed; “I make forts.” Will had still yet to make any eye contact with the doctor, and even pushed his glasses up his nose to further keep him out.

“Associations come quickly,” Hannibal said with a little smile into his coffee cup. Usually, he had to slow down for people, wait for their lumbering intellect to catch up to his own wit. That was not the case with Will. Not the case with Will at all, Hannibal’s heart began to skip beats, happily.

“So do forts,” Will sniped at the doctor and took another sip of his coffee, holing himself off even more as the doctor seemed to *enjoy* their banter.

“Not fond of eye contact with people, are you?” Hannibal asked, tilting his head a little to meet Will’s eyes. He already knew they were going to be blue, *stunningly* blue.

Will finally met the doctor’s eyes, albeit from behind his glasses, a barrier. “Eyes are distracting. You see too much. You don’t see enough. And it’s hard to focus when you’re thinking those whites are really white or they must have hepatitis, or is that a burst vein? Maybe it’s pink eye, should I leave? Do I tell them?” Will shook his head. “I try to avoid eyes whenever possible.”

“I imagine what you see and learn touches everything else in your mind. Your values and decency are present, yet shocked at your associations …” Hannibal paused, considering what

he wanted to say next, even if he could not explain the analysis. “You prefer the company of dogs, don’t you? You’d rather be in a pack of canines than sitting in an office with complicated, exhausting people? I imagine you find it much easier to show kindness to them than you do to your fellow man.”

Will froze, realizing just the sort of doctor that Lecter was. He stood, looking at Jack. “Whose profile is he working on?” He had a feeling Alana had a lot to do with this, worrying Jack over Will’s behaviors and instability.

“I’m sorry, Will. Observing is what we do. I cannot turn off mine any more than you can turn yours off,” Hannibal said, and looked at a longish, silvery dog hair on Will’s shirt.

All but snarling as he rolled his eyes, Will glared at Jack. “Please don’t psychoanalyze me. You won’t like me when I’m psychoanalyzed. Now if you’ll excuse me, I have to go give a lecture on psychoanalyzing.” Will stormed out, all but slamming the door behind him.

Hannibal turned in his chair to watch Will leave. Will’s aftershave lingered, familiar and acidic in the air. Coffee, whiskey, that aftershave …

Chapter 2

Chapter by beforethedawn, Destinyawakened

Bright and early, an expensive car pulled into the drive at Will's place in Wolftrap. Doctor Lecter stepped out, well-dressed, with a leather bag in hand, and made his way to Will's front door. He traced his fingers over the worn wood before knocking, three times.

Howls and barks resounded through the small house, and the sound of pattering paws across hardwood floors. The gruff professor looked out the window first and then opened the door. Apparently neither Jack or Doctor Lecter took him seriously.

"Long drive from Baltimore. You could have just called," Will said, clearly having looked up more on the doctor when he got home the other day.

"I thought I would apologize for my analytical ambush yesterday, in person," Hannibal said, as he looked through the open door at Will. Buster rushed to the door between Will's legs, and barked at Hannibal.

"Buster…" Will warned, and then opened the door further, tsking at the dog to get him back inside. "That's a two hour drive just to apologize. I work closer to Baltimore, you could have come to see me in Quantico."

Hannibal stepped inside, and the dogs clustered around him, sniffing at his legs urgently. "I thought I would bring breakfast, the proverbial olive branch, as it were. I'd offer to purchase breakfast for you, of course, but I'm very particular about what I put in my body. I make most of my own food."

"Of course you do," Will said, shutting the door. Unashamed, he was only in a t-shirt and his boxers, he'd sweat through the nights, and this was these were the clean pairs. Will went to the kitchen and grabbed down a few plates. The smell of Will's sweat was thick, but hardly unpleasant.

Hannibal looked down at Buster, who had begun to growl at him when Will stepped out of the room, and silenced the small, feisty dog with a direct look, at least for the moment. The other dogs stared at Hannibal, intently, fascinated by him, but quiet, obedient and wary.

"How long have you lived here, if you do not mind my asking?" Hannibal asked, when Will returned.

"A few years," Will said, setting out forks next to the plates so Hannibal could plate up whatever it was he brought. Will wouldn't be rude.

The food in the bag was still hot. Hannibal opened the thick glass dish to plate a scramble for each of them, and then offered coffee from a thermos. Steam rolled out from the narrow mouth of the thermos, and the smell of rich coffee filled the room, very different than the

coffee Hannibal could smell from the kitchen that was likely from last night. “It’s a lovely area. Wolftrap? A curious name.”

Will reached and grabbed down two clean mugs from the top cupboard and set them down. He stood across at the little breakfast bar, and took up his fork to push around the eggs a little. “Lots of wolves run through here, and it’s a small city.” Will took a bite and hummed, almost involuntarily. “It’s really good, thank you.”

“You’re very welcome,” Hannibal said, his eyes shining as he watched Will eat. “It is a beautiful place, I see why you are willing to make the drive from the city for tranquility and solitude. Fond of wolves, Will? They are, usually, remarkably shy creatures, despite their mythical reputations for brutality.”

“They’re fiercer than most dogs, but no less faithful,” Will found himself saying, shoving a piece of sausage into his mouth. “My house full of dogs doesn’t tell you anything about what I might think of wolves?”

“You might be surprised how much some revere tameness,” Hannibal said, and poured Will some coffee, then himself, and sat down with him, the dogs still staring at him in a semi-circle.

Will merely hummed as he sipped the coffee, and offered sausage to the mangy little dog with a horrible underbite.

Hannibal watched, amused, as the little dog chewed it, hungrily, quite happy to share breakfast with Will. “I doubt very much Jack sees you as anything *but* tame. You are the good china he brings out, only for special guests.”

Will chuckled around another bite and chewed slowly as he took that in, brow furrowed. “Oh yeah? How do *you* see me?”

Hannibal swallowed a bite and stared at Will as he considered his answer. “A man brave enough to feed a hungry wolf, if it came to it,” he said, “if only because he could sympathize with it’s nature.”

Will’s eyes flittered over Hannibal’s features as he spoke and he seemed struck dumb for a moment, paused his chewing and then started it back up again. “I’ve run into a few, most of them don’t need my help finding food.”

“It does not seem you have any trouble finding food, either,” Hannibal observed, with a look over at Will’s fishing equipment. “You’re comfortable out of reach of what one may only loosely call civilization, these days.”

“This bothers you?” Will asked, scraping the plate of the last bit of his food with the back of his fork and licked it off the prongs. “It’s peaceful. The stream is my… happy place.”

“Your … happy place?” Hannibal asked with his sleek features alight at the term, at the admission from the guarded man. “Why in the world would it bother me? I admire the self-sufficient, and those able to feast without distancing themselves from the true cost of their

meals. Too many people believe meat comes from plastic packages in a store, not enough honor the loss of life necessary for a feast by preparing their food with care. A fisherman is as connected to his food, just as a hunter is connected to his."

"I do that too," Will said, nodding at his desk there in the corner. "My gun. Granted, I don't find it as soothing as fishing, but I've gotten a few rabbits, deer…"

"You acknowledge the life you take in order to sustain your own," Hannibal said, and sipped his coffee. "Do you find your empathy at odds with your hobby?"

"Sometimes," Will admitted, and narrowed his gaze on the doctor. "Is this some kind of ploy to get inside my head again? Jack's idea?" He huffed.

"Jack wanted to ensure that as you and your remarkable gift journey into the belly of the Beast we are hunting, you do not journey alone," Hannibal said, and poured Will a little more of the rich coffee, their eyes meeting, amber on blue. "A lone wolf seldom lives for longer than a season, or two. Consider me a pack member, so to speak."

"A pack member? Into my family?" Will asked, gesturing his head to the dogs.

Hannibal looked at the dogs with a little smile, then back at Will. "Admittedly, it may take some time for me to earn my acceptance, more than a single breakfast, perhaps."

"Probably," Will said, sipping the dark coffee that he added just a little sugar into. Whatever Hannibal was vying for, he wasn't biting. Jack wanted someone to be his paddle, fine. He'd do that, but nothing else. "But maybe we should keep it professional."

"Would you prefer to meet in my office, in Baltimore?" Hannibal asked, quite aware Will was not about to reach out to him. Will's forts were lined with barbed wire, and spikes, designed to dissuade the curious. Fortunately, Hannibal's curiosity, especially about Will, was stronger than any barb.

"Yeah," Will said, sliding off the stool to clean up the dishes, putting them into the sink to rinse them off. "Close to work anyway."

Hannibal thanked Will for taking the dishes, and watched as he put them in the sink. "Very well, I believe I have an opening this evening, if you are free. Jack is insistent that we begin as quickly as possible."

"There won't be another killing until the next full moon," Will explained, "even if Jack doesn't believe it, that's the pattern." The brunet sighed. "Fine, I'll make the trip out."

"Why do you believe our killer waits the requisite month for his activities?" Hannibal asked, as he followed Will with his eyes, absorbing every tiny detail about the way he moved, his habits.

"That's been the pattern to these killings. Always found the morning after a full moon. Coincidence? Not likely." Will washed the dishes one-by-one and set them in the other part of the sink to dry. "Katz thinks it's a werewolf."

“Werewolf?” Hannibal asked with an arch of his eyebrow. He walked toward Will, and watched the way Will’s hands moved over the dishes, wiping the scent of their shared meal away. “The enduring myth of Lycanthropy is repeated one way or another in many of the world’s cultures. What do you make of it?”

“It’s fiction,” Will stated, “The supernatural. I think if a man were turning into a wolf every full moon someone is bound to notice.” Will washed dishes and some of the soap slipped over the side of the sink and slashed onto his already thin shirt and boxers. “It is a wolf, though.”

Hannibal watched as the suds made the fabric of what Will wore almost transparent, then looked at his eyes again, which had an almost indigo tone to them in this light. “There are legitimate psychological disorders, species dysphoria that may very well lead someone to believe they are a werewolf. It is a form of splitting, of sanctioning off one’s less noble impulses and desires to another self, rather than accept them as an integrated whole.”

“And being able to tear apart someone?” Will asked, brows raised as he looked over at Hannibal and set the last dish down, all of them clean, even Hannibal’s. “I saw the victim, there was almost nothing left of him.”

Hannibal picked up a soft, well washed cloth from the edge of the counter, and began to dry the dishes, buffing every spot off of them all as they spoke. “Man has been rending man to shreds since long before the Bible forbade it. Perhaps our killer has devised a way to act as a wolf? Or, of course, Beverly could be correct,” Hannibal chuckled, and picked up a particularly old butter knife with the cloth, polishing it without touching the tarnished metal.

“Do *you* think she’s correct?” Will asked, leaning his hip against the counter, arms folded over his chest as he watched Hannibal. “You seem to know a lot about people who might do this…”

Hannibal set the knife down, carefully, and looked over at Will. “I suppose my background in clinical psychiatry has provided me familiarity with humanity’s less rational aspects. Do you believe in monsters, Will?”

“Only the ones I’ve helped catch.” Will watched hannibal put the knife down. “You wouldn’t happen to have any patients who suffer from this would you? The delusional split part, not the werewolf part.”

Hannibal’s hands slowed as he dried Will’s plate, and he looked at the halos around their reflections in the ceramic circle as he thought it over. “I have had a patient with this sort of dysphoria, yes, years ago.”

Aware Hannibal could not say for certain, it was all Will needed to at least investigate. “No need to say more. I’m sure I could figure it out.”

“Doctor-patient confidentiality is a delicate thing,” Hannibal said, with a sigh that sank the fit curve of his chest. “I’m sorry, Will.”

“Nothing to be sorry for, it’s your job,” Will said and packed up the dry tupperware dishes of Hannibal for him and set them down near his bag. “It’s a lead, anyway. Jack won’t be on my ass for a week now.”

Hannibal chuckled a little as he watched Will, possessed by the strange urge to press his head against Will’s shoulder, against his stomach, and feel Will drag his fingers through his hair. “If that relieves stress, I suppose I’ve done part of my job…”

“Even if it doesn’t pan out, it’s something,” Will sighed, he knew it was strange, but he had a *feeling* that it wasn’t who Hannibal was referring to, but until he could prove it… He looked at Hannibal thoughtfully for a moment. “You know, I had a wolf I’d never seen before approach the house the other morning. Drove Buster insane. Now,” Will chuckled to himself and bashfully ran a hand through his own hair,”don’t take this the wrong way, but your hair was his exact coloring.”

Memories began to rush back to Hannibal’s mind, the smell of whiskey, coffee, and aftershave, and the sensation of fingers just behind his ears… Hannibal stared at Will, intensely, speechless for a moment, then managed a little smile. “Is that a compliment?”

“He was a very beautiful wolf, lonely, I think. I haven’t seen him since,” Will said, with an uneasy smile, aware he was complimenting the doctor’s looks without being so bold as doing it at face value.

Hannibal smiled, his eyes crinkling as he did so. He took a step closer, staring at Will intently, and thought of a stream as black as night with the moon shining on it. “Beautiful things can be lonely.”

“They are also deadly,” Will said, defensive suddenly, having let down one too many guards, one fort trampled on already.

“But you felt no fear of him, no dread?” Hannibal asked, staying where he was. He was given another brief glimpse into Will’s mind, and it was beautiful enough to keep him going.

“No. I didn’t feel he was out to attack me. He just wanted someone to notice him, I guess,” Will shrugged and went into the next room, when he returned he was in khakis and a terrible plaid button up. Hannibal was crouched in the living room, hand outstretched to Buster, who was sniffing at his fingertips, and growling at the same time. “Two steps forward, one step back,” Hannibal sighed, then looked up at Will, and bit his tongue regarding Will’s outfit.

“That one is picky. Don’t take it to heart,” Will said and leaned down to pet Buster’s head, which made him stop growling. “He really wanted to give that wolf a talking to the other morning.”

“Do you usually approach wolves in the woods?” Hannibal asked, looking up at Will as he stood.

Will shook his head. “We usually stay out of each other’s way.”

“What was it about this new wolf that made you abandon your usual caution?” Hannibal asked, with a sense of deja vu as they got to know each other again.

“I shot off a round to get him to go, and he didn’t even flinch. Too… domesticated. He seemed like someone owned him, brushed fur, soft. He was very sweet, actually,” Will admitted, slipping his boots on.

“Sweet?” Hannibal asked, surprised enough to pause halfway into his long coat, eyebrows raised. “I’m sure you’re the first to think so.”

“He let me pet him, hug him, and I was nuzzled. I don’t think he does that to many, nor would any wolf.” Will shrugged and got his coat, and let the dogs out of the house as they all ran past them into the yard.

“You are already exceptional,” Hannibal said, quietly, looking away for a rare moment, his steady gaze faltering for a moment. “Are you familiar with the concept of Lupercalia?”

Another shake of his head. “No. Should I be?” Will leaned against the porch rails, watching the dogs run about, and pee where they liked, doing their business.

“In ancient, even pre-Roman civilization, one member of a community would no doubt be more talented than others at interacting with wolves that threatened the livestock. This man would be dubbed the wolf-charmer, or Lupincinus, and he would sing the wolves away from the flocks with his howling. The Lupincinus would wear the pelt of a wolf, which some said gave him the power to transform into a wolf at will. In the late winter, mid-February, to be precise, man’s wolfishness was celebrated with a holiday called Lupercalia in which animal sacrifices were made, men wore pelts, and chose their lovers by binding their wrists together. It was rumored to be the time of year in which wolves chose their life long mates, and bonded with them, and has since been replaced with St. Valentine’s day.”

Will listened and then gave the doctor a sidelong glance. “More superstitions and fictional tales?” Still, he couldn’t help but be fascinated, he was curious why *he* had not been mauled the other morning.

“Fairy tales explain difficult truths in simple ways,” Hannibal said to Will, watching the sun filter through Will’s beautiful eyes, and into his curls. “Beasts, whether wolves, or man, bind themselves to another … though I think wolves may do so with more loyalty than man.”

“It's in their nature,” Will agreed, leaning still, on his elbows, he looked over at Hannibal. “Are suggesting I'm the wolf charmer?”

“It seems you’ve already charmed at least one,” Hannibal murmured, as he gazed at Will. “Do you expect to see your wolf again?”

“I had hoped. I tried it see if he would follow me to the house, but he left. So not as charmed as you might think.” Will let out a soft sigh, watching his dogs leap and bound after one another.

“I’m sure he’ll be back,” Hannibal said with a soft look in his eyes at Will. “You’re kind and open with canines in a way you feel you cannot afford to be with your fellow man.”

“People judge too much. Not outwardly, but they do it.” Will knew, he’d felt it first hand, seen it roll off people in waves. He looked over at Hannibal, realizing the other man was actually understanding him, and not just to the point of doctor his nature usually could.

“It’s difficult to see what people assume they hide with great skill. You and I both see a little too clearly, I think.”

“Do we?” Will tilted his chin up a little to meet Hannibal’s eyes, no glasses to protect him from seeing too much, or not enough, but just the right amount. Will smiled uneasily and turned away, back to his dogs. “Your eyes are the like the wolf’s.”

“The wolf had brown eyes?” Hannibal asked, with a smile, and moved a little closer, so that their elbows were nearly touching. “Strange color, for a wolf…”

“Amber,” Will corrected, an odd sense of familiarity coming over him as Hannibal neared. Will’s once surely attitude had melted right off once they were not trying to analyze him.

“A shame you did not manage to photograph your wolf, I’d like to see him through your eyes,” Hannibal murmured, and moved just a little closer, so that their elbows touched.

“Who knows if he’ll be back. If he does return, I’ll try to get something with my phone.” Will looked down where their arms touched, an easy feeling coming over him, despite the urge to snap at the doctor and protect his personal space.

Hannibal didn’t move, neither toward or away from Will. He felt that it was his turn to charm a wild animal, even if Will looked human. “Did you have dogs as a child, Will?”

“One,” Will answered, “and not for long. Moved around alot and my dad didn’t think keeping a dog on a boat was a great idea.”

“What sort of dog?” Hannibal asked, trying to get to know a little about Will’s childhood, in a lateral way.

“Mutt, it was a weird mix of poodle and corgi, and something else. Ugliest thing, but I loved him. Gave him away to some family with four kids.” Will shrugged. “Never saw him again.”

“What did your mother think of giving the dog away?” Hannibal asked, with a tilt of his head.

“Wouldn’t know. Never knew her.” Will breathed in deeply and let it out slowly. His mother was not a hard topic, nor was it stressful, as not knowing her only left him with a feeling emptiness, not dread or hate.

“I’m sorry to hear that. Losing one’s mother at a young age is excruciating,” Hannibal said, with a tone that implied he had personal knowledge of that subject.

“It would be if I could remember her,” Will looked over at Hannibal, his hands clasped in front of him. “Must be much harder when you had a mother to lose.”

Hannibal’s amber eyes dimmed, and he nodded, softly. “I was eight when I lost both of my parents, simultaneously.”

“A great tragedy, I’m sorry,” Will said, with empathy that was heartfelt, even if he didn’t intend for it to be, it couldn’t quite help it.

“Were you an only child, Will?” Hannibal asked, after a moment’s silence as they watched the dogs together.

“Yes,” Will said, well aware that this was underlying about Hannibal, that he likely had a sibling, and Will had a feeling they, too, were dead. Tragic.

“Perhaps your dog, as briefly as you had him, was a sibling, of sorts. You attempted to create a family for yourself, where you felt alone. I’m sorry that was taken from you, Will. I doubt your father was as astute as you are.”

“I adapted,” Will said, though he was sure the doctor thought otherwise, as Will was clearly very different, and avoided people at all cost. Except when ambushed as he was right now.

“You spent your childhood aboard a boat. I’m sure you adapted many times over, with every new school. Will Graham, always the stranger…” Hannibal observed, almost fondly. “Bones grow stronger under repeated stress, thicker and less likely to break. You are not the fragile little teacup Jack, and I’m sure a good many others believe you are. Do you tell them you fall on the autistic spectrum? I’m certain many of them assume you might, at first glance.”

“No, but I let them assume, and I don't correct them. It…” Will bit the inside of his cheek and cast a glance at Hannibal through the corner of one eye. “It gives me reason to avoid eye contact, and social situations. All of which are very difficult for me.”

“It also permits you to live in the shadow of their lowered expectations. It’s helpful to be underestimated,” Hannibal said, with an understanding look at Will, and the slightest curl to his lips.

“Easier to not let anyone down either,” Will sighed, aware that working with Jack Crawford was not going to be easy, but hopefully with this lead, things would ease up.

“Do you feel you were a disappointment to your father?” Hannibal asked, softly. His own gift for reading people was less emotional and intuitive than Will’s, based more on the swiftness of his complex intellect, his sharp and lightning-fast ability to deduce and analyze.

“No, I think I was a burden on my father, which didn’t help. He drank a lot, said things he probably didn’t mean,” Will shrugged one shoulder. “He died some years ago.”

“Did you ever consider running away? Finding a new life on your own, or did you feel obliged to care for him, as many children of alcoholics do?” Hannibal asked, looking at

Will's profile as he spoke. Will's nose was perfect, and delicate in contrast to the bristling personality behind his features.

"Sure," Will said, more of a whisper, as he never told anyone that he had tried once. "I felt too much guilt though, only made it down to the beginning of the docks. Once I graduated high school though, I left."

"You were, in a sense, a burden to your father, and his lifeline at once," Hannibal murmured, and rested his arm against Will's. "An unwinnable war."

Will's brows raised as he gave another half shrug, his shoulder now touching Hannibal's as he moved. "Unfortunately true."

"It is for the best that you escaped once you'd reached young adulthood," Hannibal said, and looked across the wooded wilderness around Will's house. "Some beasts simply do not belong in cages."

"I'm hardly a beast," Will sighed, as the dogs ran back toward the house, and up the porch to wag and sniff at the both of them.

"The wolf charmers, back in ancient Rome, were suspected of being able to become a beast," Hannibal said, holding out his hand to let one of the larger dogs smell his fingers and palm, shyly.

"To fit in with the wolves," Will stated, understanding. He shook his head slowly. "Not quite a wolf charmer then."

"That remains to be seen. If your friend returns, I believe that is as definitive as one could ever hope proof on the matter to be," Hannibal chuckled, and took a deep breath, beginning to become a little addicted to the strange, but lovely smell of Will's skin.

"That's a big if," Will pointed out. "He was lost I think, probably found his way back home." The longer Hannibal stuck around, the comfortable Will became.

"Yes, perhaps he has," Hannibal said with an enigmatic smile, almost to himself. "Found his pack, that is."

"He was lonely, I hope he did find his pack," Will mused, mostly to himself.

"Have you looked for him?" Hannibal asked, curiously, as the dogs took turns smelling his shoes, and his hand when he offered it. They all seemed fascinated.

"Been a little busy, but I check on the forest opening just out that way where I found him the other morning when I get home. Nothing. I'm sure Buster would have something to say about it if he did return," Will explained, casually, letting out sad sigh.

"Are you as lonely as your wolf? Do you long for a pack, Will?" Hannibal asked.

"I have my pack," Will said, gesturing the dogs that swarmed them, and Will laughed, crouching down to their level to give them pets and let them lick his face.

“They adore you, certainly,” Hannibal said with a little smile, watching Will swarmed by his furry children. “Do you believe they understand you?”

“I don’t know that they understand, but they care in their own way, with their own understanding,” Will explained, looking up at Hannibal as the sun rose a little higher in the sky, shining into Will’s sea blue eyes.

“They are low risk emotional investments, unlikely to abandon or betray you,” Hannibal said as he gave the biggest dog a pet over his head. “Perhaps I should acquire a cat,” he chuckled.

“Why is that?” Will asked, brow raised in question at the doctor.

“There is a difference between having a multitude of acquaintances ready to believe the social facade presented to them, and having close friends,” Hannibal replied, as he gazed into the darkness of the woods.

“What’s that got to do with a cat?” Will teased with a little smile, finally standing again, at full height, but Hannibal was still a bit taller.

“Perhaps your approach has some demonstrated benefits, I hardly ever have my face licked when I come home,” Hannibal chuckled, with a flirtatious look at Will.

Will’s body spiked with heat, and he flushed as he smiled and chuckled, shrugging that off. “A cat will hardly lick your face on returning home. Well, not most cats.”

Hannibal watched color rise in Will’s face, and admired it for a moment. “I can’t say I’ve ever had one, or any pet, for that matter. My schedule would likely not allow it.”

“Then a cat would be a good choice. Low maintenance, you don’t need to take them out either,” Will said, “Or you could take it to work with you. Office cat. So long as no patients are allergic. Everyone could do with a pet of some kind, especially those who are lonely,” Will suggested, knowingly.

“Do I seem lonely to you, Will?” Hannibal asked, one elegant eyebrow raised as they made eye contact, again.

Staring for a long time at Hannibal, Will finally nodded his head. “Yes. I think you lost your pack long ago and haven’t bothered to replace them.”

Hannibal stared back at Will, intensely and intimately, silent for a moment. “I have yet to find anyone I think could survive joining me on the hunt,” he said, mysteriously.

“Maybe you aren’t looking hard enough,” Will suggested, well aware he was flirting right back with the doctor, much to his own dismay. He actually liked Hannibal.”

A spark of interest flashed in Hannibal’s eyes, lighting them up a little as the gold seemed to come to life, and he smiled at Will. “What are your feelings on roast beef?” he asked, in a much lighter tone.

“I like it okay,” Will offered, “don’t eat it much.”

“I happen to have one slow-roasting at my home as we speak. It’s much too large for one man to eat on his own. Would you care to join me?” Hannibal offered, hopefully, his heart beating a little faster.

From meeting at his office to meeting at Hannibal personal place of residence took Will by surprise, but the thing that surprised him the most was the word that fell from his mouth: “Sure.” He paused. “After the session?”

“Given that my office is attached to my home, that would be perfect,” Hannibal said, almost as surprised by Will’s answer as Will was.

“You don’t find it odd to have your patients know where you live?” Will asked, incredulously, brows furrowed as he watched Hannibal curiously.

“I’ve never had any problems,” Hannibal chuckled, as though his personal security was never anything he’d doubted for a moment.

The surly man shrugged, and let it go. “What time? For the session?”

“Seven pm?” Hannibal asked, with a new gleam in his eye at the thought of having Will for dinner.

“So a very late dinner then,” Will stated. There was a lot of time between now and the, a lot of time to change his mind, he was sure of it, but seeing that look on Hannibal’s face, Will couldn’t bring himself to do that.

Damn empathy.

“In that case, I should head back to the city,” Hannibal said, his head full of plans to make the meal perfect.

Will nodded and went back in to get Hannibal his bag, and his tupperware, everything clean and packed away. “Should I bring anything?”

“Only yourself,” Hannibal answered.

Chapter 3

Chapter by beforethedawn, Destinyawakened

Even though Hannibal said to bring nothing, Will brought a bottle of wine that he selected from the supermarket, one that he was told was very nice with roast. Since he knew little about wine, Will trusted that was so, and brought it to his session with Hannibal since dinner was right after. Even though it was Will's day off and he called Jack with what to look for after talking with Hannibal, he took the drive to Maryland anyway.

He jogged up Hannibal's steps, to the office where he saw his patients, and knocked on the door. He pressed down his shirt, a little nicer than what he wore earlier, but not that much nicer, still covered in dog fur.

Hannibal opened the door, dressed in a splendid red and grey suit with a floral tie. "Will, come in, please," he said. If it was possible, Hannibal was even more polished now than earlier, every hair in place, shoes gleaming, his tie and pocket square crisp.

Will stared at the older man for a moment, and then handed him the bottle. "For dinner, not the session," he murmured, their fingers brushing as the bottle exchanged grips.

Hannibal smiled, which made his amber eyes crinkle at the edges as he examined the bottle. "Thank you, Will. I'll open it when we're done," he promised, respecting the boundary Will drew.

The brunet wasn't sure how ethical it was to drink in sessions, if it was ethical at all. He didn't want to imply anything, especially about himself. "Sure."

"Have a seat, wherever you'd like," Hannibal offered as he closed the door behind them. His office was gothic, and elegant, swathed in scarlet and grey, like Hannibal himself.

Will kept his coat on and set his satchel down on the chaise lounge, and then took a seat in a comfy looking leather chair, hands behind his knees, clasped, nervously. "Quite the library you have," he said, looking up at all the books.

"Thank you," Hannibal said, as he sat opposite Will, and crossed his legs. "I've amassed quite a collection, I am not one to travel lightly, far too fond of my things."

"I doubt you travel much, in that case. Except for holiday, maybe," Will said, staring up at the shelves and shelves of books, all clean and not dusty at all like the piles he has at home, collecting until the day that he decided he'll read them again. "Can't bear to leave your things, so why bother moving, unless you must…" It was mostly a whisper, and mostly to himself.

"I spent much of my time as a young man travelling, I enjoy the opportunity to put down roots, as it were. I imagine you've also had enough of travel, for a lifetime." Hannibal's eyes were locked on Will, absorbing his every movement.

“I like where I am,” Will mentioned, taking a long, deep breath, and then relaxed back in the chair, his hands on spread knees.

“What is it about Wolftrap that appealed to you, Will? Every man’s home is a form of self-portraiture…” Hannibal said, framed by his own wickedly beautiful office.

“The quiet. Calm. No noise from the road, no freeway to hear honking cars head by in the night,” Will stated, rolling his top lip over his bottom lip. “Less noise for me to… share my thoughts with.”

“Submersion in a sensory deprivation tank is both soothing, and confronting. Most are unprepared to face their own thoughts. Your mind, Will, is like a polished mirror, able to reflect everyone around it with crystal clarity, able to borrow their shapes and hues as your own. How might one describe a mirror’s surface, when it has nothing to reflect? Tell me, Will, what occupies your mind in your quiet wilderness? What do you think of the most when you are alone?” Hannibal asked, pen in hand, although he made no move to write anything. He was memorizing the exquisite man before him, inside and out.

Taking a deep breath, Will found himself having to *think* about what he thought about. He frowned a little in a vague shrug. “I try not to. Work, class, cases. My mind is free there, no one else to worry about. Un… cluttered.”

“Do you dream often?” Hannibal asked, with the manner of a man brushing aside a thin layer of dirt to find the treasure he knew all along would wait underneath.

“Always,” Will said, looking around. “Vividly.” He looked back at Hannibal.

“Of what do you dream?” Hannibal asked, meeting Will’s eyes with patient calm, and intense interest.

“Cases. Things that happen in the waking life,” Will shrugged, it was hard to explain his dreams of such great detail.

“Do you often wake gasping for air? Are the dogs concerned when you dream of blood-soaked scenes?” Hannibal asked, able to guess the real reason for Will’s vague replies.

“Sometimes,” Will said, his eyes averting across the room to anything else but Hannibal. “I have night sweats from the nightmares.”

“Do you? How frequently do you wake?” Hannibal asked, softly. He could imagine it well, Will bolting awake, his thin t-shirt and curls plastered to him with sweat.

“At least once a night, to change. I soak the sheets.” He didn’t mention how he usually just wrapped up in a towel after that, far too personal, far too quickly. Will licked his lips.

Hannibal’s eyebrows rose at that, lips parted as he imagined it, very well. “Do the dogs sleep with you? Perhaps they would be of comfort. Another heartbeat in bed is a soothing thing.”

Will chuckled, shaking his head, tousled hair falling into his eyes. “No, they’d make everything hotter, sweatier… They’ll jump on the bed if I need them…”

“Have you ever considered a therapy dog?” Hannibal asked, as he crossed his legs the other way. “One trained to assist with sleep disturbances?”

“No,” Will said immediately. “I don’t need therapy and I don’t need a therapy dog. Mine do fine. I get night terrors from an overactive imagination. Trouble of the job.”

“Interrupted sleep on a chronic basis can be a serious health issue, you’ve never felt impaired by your fatigue?” Hannibal asked.

“I… I get to work, I get back. In one piece.” For Will, it was pretty standard, though admittedly it had started to take a toll here lately, catching himself dozing off between classes.

“Thus far,” Hannibal chuckled, and tilted his head at Will, knowingly. “Having survived surgical training, I’m well acquainted with the trials of sleep-deprivation. Do you find it difficult to relax?”

“Not when I’m fishing, or with my dogs,” Will said, plainly, starting to wonder how much of this was procedural and how much was the doctor’s curiosity.

“Have you ever considered hypnosis?” Hannibal asked, lightly.

Brows raised, Will shook his head, hands gripped into the leather chair, nervously. “No.”

“I could teach you to hypnotize yourself,” Hannibal offered, with a spread of his hands.

“Myself? Isn’t that beyond the point?” Will took a deep breath, he didn’t trust anything like that coming from anyone, not even himself. “I’m fine how I am.”

“No problems, Will? How do you manage to come back to yourself after inhabiting the mind of a killer?” Hannibal asked, curiously.

“I go home, I shower, and I fish,” Will said, though he couldn’t always do those things, and he had a feeling he would be spending a lot more time inside the minds of others than out here soon.

“Is that enough to wash the blood from your psyche, Will? How does it feel to imagine yourself in a killer’s place? What of our loose monster, do you feel his exhilaration when you imagine torn open throats and blood that steams against the cold night air?”

Will’s eyes had slipped closed, he was being sucked into the killer’s mind, savage and yet refined, all at once. Palm pressed to his forehead he tried to escape from the terror, the teeth gnashing and gnawing against bone and flesh, ripping sinew and blood, scattering it everywhere. Will shook, trembling as his hand came over his eyes, rubbing into his his sockets slowly. “Stop,” he whispered.

Hannibal leaned closer in his chair, watching Will as he seemed drawn into the killer’s mind with only a few words. Hannibal took a deep breath, admiring the sight before him for a moment, before he reached up, very gently, and put his hands to Will’s wrists, pulling his hands away from his face. “It’s stopped, Will,” he murmured in a calm, reassuring voice, as

warm as brandy near a fire.

He could feel Will's pulse hammering under his fingers, racing with fear … or was it arousal?

Hard to say with Will's skin flushed, the start of a fresh sweat doused across his skin in an even sheen. When he opened his eyes again he stared directly into Hannibal's amber ones, and the urge to seek comfort egged at the back of his mind, reminded of the wolf. Still shaking, Will did his best to still. "Maybe getting out isn't easy…"

"That is why I am here," Hannibal murmured, and pulled out his silk pocket square to blot at Will's cheek and forehead, gently. "To ensure that when Jack sends you into the dark, you are not alone."

Will's pupils were spread, wide and dark, and their faces were close.

"Are you my… flashlight?" Will asked, trying to maintain his grim and surly facade, but there was no denying that the more he was around Hannibal, the more at ease he became, the more himself he felt. He swallowed, sea blue, dark gaze meeting the doctor's amber one.

Will didn't push the other man back.

"Quite possibly more like a paddle, there to help guide you in the right direction," Hannibal murmured, one hand still resting on Will's forearm.

"Jack's afraid of breaking me. Aren't you?" Will whispered, gaze flitting from Hannibal's mouth then back to his eyes. Heat spiked through him, making him flush all over again.

"I don't think you're quite as breakable as Jack might believe," Hannibal said, his sculpted lips moving around the words deliberately, and slowly. He was well aware of the path of Will's gaze, and the flush that returned to his skin. "Your facade may crack, like the shell of an egg. What lies beneath is infinitely more interesting."

"Is it?" Will asked, watching every movement of Hannibal's lips, shamelessly.

"Quite frankly, I'm dying to meet the beautiful beast you have hidden away from the world," Hannibal murmured, his accent a little thicker than usual as he stared at Will's eyes.

"There is no beast," Will whispered this time, half believing what he said, while still sounding unsure.

Hannibal smiled a little, as he would if Will were trying to talk himself out of a nightmare. "No beast inside you that delights at the worlds he is able to inhabit with his imagination? It's a way out of the cage to which you've confined yourself, Will."

"I'm… not sure what you insinuating," Will said, as he pushed to stand, slipping past the other man and to his feet, hands deep in his pockets, flustered and frustrated.

Hannibal stood, and smoothed one hand over his suit jacket before he approached Will, as though trying not to startle a wild animal. "On the subject of your wolf friend, I think perhaps

you understood one another. You are no tame dog, Will. You are not repelled by the crimes you investigate, you are repelled by their appeal to you."

"That doesn't make me a beast," Will said, halfway over his shoulder, which were squared back, not facing Hannibal again, too afraid of what he saw there-- what he saw and *liked* there.

"Are you suggesting that a beast is necessarily an evil thing? Your friend, the wolf, is assuredly a beast. Would you say he's evil, Will, or might you refuse to condemn him for embracing his nature?" Hannibal asked, gently, just over Will's shoulder.

"Of course not. Are *you* suggesting it's in *my* nature to be as the wolf?" Will turned finally, huffing.

"I think there is a reason you find it difficult to achieve intimacy with most humans, despite what should be a natural gift toward it. There is something within you that you know most people would reject the moment it was revealed. It's a terrible way to live Will, shame is a prison," Hannibal said, as he walked around Will, in a slow circle as he spoke, then faced him again.

"Let me guess," Will replied, watching Hannibal, "you're not going to reject me. You like it. You want to… stoke the embers, and see what happens."

"Most people would shoot a wolf on their property, on sight. You did not, you accepted the wolf, you embraced him, allowed his teeth near your face with the full knowledge that he could tear it off with a snap of his jaws. Why did you not shoot him, Will?"

Pieces started to fit together slowly, though they hardly made a lot of sense, Will was starting to see it clearly. "He has a right to be there as much as I do…"

Hannibal's tongue moved over the sharp edges of his teeth, and he swallowed. "An excuse for allowing him to pass unharmed, perhaps, but not for embracing him, Will."

"It just happened. I mostly went out to get him off the property," Will explained, though even to him that sounded weak. He'd felt the pulls and motions dragging him toward the wolf, for… whatever reason.

"You chose to approach, and to allow him to approach you. What did you feel as you did so? Kinship? Understanding? Fear?" Hannibal asked, not about to allow Will to wriggle out of his choices.

"The two former. If I feared, he'd smell it," Will said, though he was sure everything he did ran on some form of fear, else he'd give up a long time ago, finding nothing he did anything but boring.

Hannibal took a deep breath as he stepped closer to Will, backing him up against the ladder with every step. "You refuse to believe you are a beast, but you require one to understand you."

Will's elbows hit first and he leaned them back against the ladder as his gaze shift to look up slightly at Hannibal. "Everyone wants to be understood. Do I have to be a beast to have one understand me?"

Hannibal leaned a little closer for a moment, and savoured the way Will's body bent back, against the ladder, opening his chest, displaying the length of his pale throat. "Being understood is a rare thing for you, a rare thing for myself, as well."

Swallowing, Will's Adam's apple bobbed, and he watched Hannibal with a narrowing gaze. "Am I understanding you?" he queried, chest heaving just slightly as Hannibal got closer, able to feel his warmth even from inches away.

"I think we understand one another," Hannibal whispered, as he stared at Will's perfect lips. His own scent, perfectly balanced custom cologne, hid something more mysterious beneath.

Will considered that and sighed, leaning back now more than just being pressed against it, trying to seem more casual about being *trapped* , and licked his lips. "Maybe we do. I… feel a strange connection with you. It's a little frightening."

There it was, a moment of honesty. "What frightens you about it?" Hannibal asked, softly, letting himself take a deep breath of Will's skin before he stepped back.

"Letting someone know me, letting someone close. The backlash isn't usually nice," Will explained, breathing out slowly once Hannibal had moved, and he quickly slipped away from the ladder, and then turned, going up it instead. Safer in higher places.

Hannibal chuckled as he watched Will retreat to higher ground. "Are you certain you're not the werewolf, Will?" he asked, with a smile in his voice. "Your instincts are deeply animal in nature…"

Will bristled at that; "Do you think I am?" He hummed as he walked the lines of books. "And I thought we were edging along the line of it being a human… with problems?"

"That is certainly a better solution than hunting for a mythological creature," Hannibal smirked, as he watched Will inspect his books. Some of them were very old, and in Lithuanian.

Will was starting to believe in the mythological, actually, as the wolf he'd seen was on the full moon, and he'd hadn't seen it since. There were a few things about Hannibal as well, but he could not quite place it yet. No evidence. He skimmed finger over the bridge of the books, like he was memorizing them. "Perhaps. Perhaps not." He looked down at Hannibal, leaning on the rail. "You didn't answer your question. Do you think I could be a werewolf?" Curious was all Will could be at this point.

Hannibal hesitated, for a moment, and licked his lips, unable to resist. "I think anyone could be a werewolf," he said as he looked up at Will.

"So, in saying the killer is a werewolf, it could be anyone?" Will asked, brows raised as he cast a gaze scrutinizingly down at Hannibal.

“If werewolves are more than a metaphor for the worst of man’s impulses, and if it is transmitted via a bite … whom among us could not be a monster?”

Will mulled that over but said nothing, instead he sighed, locking away this information for later. This wouldn’t help the case or Will, not right now anyway. “I guess everyone has the ability to be a monster, it’s if we choose to be one.”

“We are what we repeatedly do, or so Aristotle insisted,” Hannibal agreed, and looked at his watch. “I don’t suppose you’re ready for dinner?”

“I could eat,” Will said, stepping down from the ladder, slowly, landing on the ground softly. “Don’t forget the wine.”

“I would never forget the wine,” Hannibal chuckled, and picked up the bottle from his desk, looking at it fondly. He opened a door Will had not come through, and held it open for his guest.

Will followed after his host, taking in every bit of his surroundings. “I hope it will go well, the man at the market said it would be perfect with roast beef.”

Hannibal let the door close after Will joined him in a tastefully decorated foyer with a large staircase that led up to the second story of the grand house. “I’m certain it will, I look forward to opening it. Do you drink wine frequently, or just whiskey?” Hannibal asked as he led Will past the stairs, through a short hallway with beautifully illuminated pieces of art, and into a spacious kitchen that smelled like *heaven* .

Taking in his surroundings, Will followed after Hannibal, keeping up with his long, fluid stride. “Whiskey. I don't know anything about wine.”

“Likewise, I know very little about whiskey,” Hannibal said as he removed his jacket, and rolled up the sleeves of his shirt, then washed his hands in the sink.

Will watched hannibal, unable to concentrate on anything but his forearms, the strain of muscle, the pop of veins. A hot flush flitted through him and suddenly everything was too warm. “Not too much to know. I don't like anything fancy.”

“When did you begin to enjoy the simple pleasure of whiskey?” Hannibal asked, as he put on an apron, and tied it neatly behind his back. The white fabric wrapped around his trim form perfectly, and made his shoulders look even wider.

“Teens,” the brunet said, swallowing. He looked away. “My dad's drink of choice. I'd steal some from his bottle, replace it with water. He was usually too drunk to notice.”

“It’s likely you did him a favor,” Hannibal said as he began to slice a few vegetables for garnish with a very sharp knife. “I don’t usually bring guests into the kitchen, but since our session was just prior to dinner, I’ve had no time to plate our meals. Can I offer you a glass of wine now?”

“I could open the bottle if you'd like,” Will said, spreading his hands, looking for something to do with his hands.

Hannibal pulled a sleek corkscrew from within a drawer, and handed it to Will, their fingers brushing. “Thank you, Will. Appreciated.”

Will took the key and the bottle. He unwrapped the top and then screwed the metal end down into the cork. He pulled it out and set it on the counter, then noticed Hannibal had wine glasses, grabbed two down and poured them full. A distraction was nice, though it only lasted a few minutes before he was holding his wine and watching the doctor finish dinner.

Hannibal arranged what smelled like a potato dish, but looked like art on a platter, and accented it with the vegetables he just sliced, adding color to the platter in the right places. “I hope you do not mind saffron…”

“Should I?” Will asked, chewing his lip a little as he sniffed the wine in his hand.

“I doubt you will,” Hannibal chuckled, and brought the side dishes to the dining room through a mahogany door, then returned for the roast. He pulled it out of the oven and set it on a brass platter, then accented it with a couple of tomato roses that he curled with his fingers, and a few leaves.

“Dinner is as good as served, Will. Please, take a seat in the dining room.” The table was set with two places: beautiful, and simple china with gold-handled cutlery, and a fire crackling behind their chairs.

Making his way in, Will say down at the setting beside the head of the table, and looked at the fancy dinner ware. He'd only ever seen such nice things in Magazines. “You use gold instead of silver?”

“Silver is ubiquitous, and expected at a dinner table,” Hannibal said, before he went back to his own glass, and brought it into the dining room, his apron off, and suit jacket on again. “I prefer to use alternative metals at my table. I have a weakness for detail,” he smiled, and began to carve the roast, offering a few juicy slices to Will, first.

Will accepted and set his plate down again, waiting for Hannibal to eat first and then took a bite slowly. “Interesting. But not abnormal for you.”

“For me?” Hannibal asked with an amused arch of his eyebrow. Behind him, the cobalt walls made his eyes look even warmer, the color of whiskey in contrast.

“You like the different. You don't like fitting in, per say. You prefer to stand out,” Will said after another bite.

“As much as I can afford to stand out, yes, I happen to enjoy it,” Hannibal said with another bite of roast, followed by a sip of his wine as he let Will’s eyes over the rim of the crystal. “A perfect complement to the meat, thank you, Will. I should have you select my bottle more often.”

“I didn’t, the man at the grocery market did,” Will insisted, and tried the wine with the food, it was surprisingly good.

“Still very good,” Hannibal chuckled at Will’s modestly, and sipped his wine again before helping himself to another piece of roast. He ate neatly, but surprisingly quickly, as though ravenous despite his refined manners.

Will continued to eat slowly, letting the discussion from early linger in his mind, taking in every detail of Hannibal and what he knew about the myths surrounding werewolves. “So you prefer gold to silver, what else do you prefer that is very common to everyone else?”

Hannibal looked over the table at Will, with a flicker of curiosity at the question, licking his lips before he sipped his wine. “Many of my tastes are unconventional, or so I’ve been told,” he said, mysteriously.

“That doesn’t answer the question.” Will raised his brows expectantly as he cut into his roast slowly, and forked a bit into his mouth and then some of the potato dish. “I’d bet you enjoy baths to showers.”

Hannibal laughed at that, and watched Will eat for a moment. “I find showers very noisy,” he confessed while he refilled his glass, then Will’s. “The pounding of water against tile and it’s echoing is nearly painful. I have very sensitive hearing, which makes urban life somewhat challenging, of course, but I manage.”

The house was almost perfectly quiet, save for music playing in another room, something soothing that could barely be heard.

Mentally, Will filed both pieces of information away. “So why live here? You suffer just the same as I do, though mine is my head, yours is your ears.”

“It is rather difficult to start a psychiatric practice when one does not live in an urban center. I suppose now that I am established, it would be possible to relocate, but-” Hannibal sighed, looking over Will’s shoulder at a painting of a serene forest and a stream on his mantle. “The opportunity has not yet presented itself. I’ve adapted.” Hannibal’s sense of hearing was of course, nothing compared to his sense of smell.

Will glanced behind him where the other man looked, and then back at him. “Nothing stops you. Tons of people will drive to what they need, if it’s good enough.”

“If it’s good enough?” Hannibal laughed, a row of usually hidden, sharp teeth showing themselves as he laughed like that. “High praise indeed.”

“I’ve only been to see you professionally once, if we could even call it that,” Will pointed out and set his fork down, sipping his wine instead.

Hannibal nodded, obviously not offended at all, rather delighted by Will’s acerbic charm. “We can barely call it that,” he agreed, enjoying himself far, far more with Will than he ever did dining with anyone else.

“What would you call it?” Will asked, pointedly, only one brow raised this time as he sipped his wine slowly.

Hannibal admired the expression on Will’s face, and the color of his eyes before he answered: “an attempt to engage in therapy on the part of two men much more suited to becoming friends than client and doctor.”

“Therapy among friends?” Will smiled behind his glass, and then set it down, licking his lips slowly, purposefully.

Hannibal’s eyes followed Will’s lips, then moved back to his eyes, finding Will more fascinating by the second. “I certainly hope you consider me a friend.”

“We’ve only just met officially the other day, but your chances don’t do look too bad,” Will teased, taking another sip of wine, and then stared down into the red liquid.

“I’ll take that as the closest you will ever come to paying a genuine compliment,” Hannibal laughed. “More roast?”

“No thank you, I’m quite full,” Will said, politely, able to taken on certain mannerisms of people around him, and he honestly never really meant to, it was all part of his empathy.

Hannibal nodded, and stood to clear the plates. His hands were well cared for, with thick, but very well filed, clean nails. “I prepared dessert, but that can wait.”

Will took careful notice of every piece and inch of Hannibal that he could, without being seen at watching him too much. “Planning to keep me until my stomach creates more room?”

“Are you eager to make your escape?” Hannibal chuckled as he refilled their glasses, and took his seat again.

“Not at all. I’m starting to find you fascinating,” Will said, honestly, taking a larger sip of his wine.

Hannibal blushed a little. Where he had been perfectly clean shaven when Will arrived, a faint shadow of stubble began to emerge. “At least the feeling is mutual.”

Will caught himself staring at Hannibal’s face, mesmerized, and then his lips, back to his eyes, all familiar somehow. “I’m hardly any more interesting than you.”

“I beg to differ,” Hannibal murmured and stared at Will. “You are a literal breath of fresh air.”

“It’s the smell of the dogs and outdoors,” Will insisted, swirling his wine around his glass slowly.

“And that aftershave,” Hannibal laughed. “I’m going to venture a guess that you procured it in a drug store?”

“I keep getting it for Christmas,” Will said, elusively, canting his head. “You don’t like it?”

“It reminds me a little of bug spray,” Hannibal teased.

“Bug spray?” Will looked slightly offended at that. “Too bad it doesn’t work as one,” he said, pointedly at the doctor.

Hannibal laughed, softly, and sipped his wine. “Feel free to mock my cologne, it would be only fair.”

“Why would I? That’s.. Impolite isn’t it?” Will canted his head, twirling his glass of wine between his thumb and forefinger, watching the wine circle the glass and the legs of it run down back into the bowl.

“All in the name of good-natured banter,” Hannibal assured Will, trying to smooth his easily ruffled feathers.

“I’d hate to accidentally hurt your fine, regal feelings,” Will bit back, with a slight grin. They did have good banter, just as they had in Jack’s office, which still set his nerves on end.

“Is that what I’ve done? Hurt your feelings?” Hannibal asked before another sip of wine and a fond look at Will.

“Not at all. Takes a lot to break me, if that’s what you’re trying to do. Just be careful what you dish out, as you might just get it back,” Will cautioned.

“I have no interest in breaking something so exquisitely rare, and interesting. May I offer an olive branch of sorts in the kitchen?” Hannibal asked, slyly.

“The kitchen?” Will asked.

“Trust me,” Hannibal smiled, and stood to lead Will into the kitchen. A deep copper pan rested on the stove, covered, with something bubbling inside it.

Will stood, slowly, wine still in hand, and followed his host back to the kitchen. “Dessert?”

“Dessert, best fresh, or so I’ve heard,” Hannibal said, and removed his jacket again to put on his apron, rolled his sleeves up, and washed his hands before he pulled a baking sheet of neatly cut squares of pastry.

He pulled the lid off of the pan, to reveal golden oil bubbling, and lowered two of the squares into it with tongs.

“How did you…” Will couldn’t even bring himself to ask the question fully, enthralled with watching his favorite treat as a boy made right in front of him. It’d been a while.

Hannibal smiled as the pastries danced in the oil, turning golden brown. “Jack told me that you are from New Orleans. I’m familiar enough with French technique that I thought I would prepare Beignets,” Hannibal said, delighted at Will’s reaction. “They’re very popular in Louisiana, I have heard.”

“They are,” Will assured the doctor, “Have you had them before now?”

“I have never had the pleasure,” Hannibal said, and picked up a waiting dish with paper towel stacked neatly to absorb some grease. He laid the desserts on it and added two more to the oil. “Powdered sugar is in the glass shaker to your right.”

Will grabbed the shaker and dusted the pastries with the sugar lightly at first and then he kept adding more with a glint in his eyes, a smirk gracing his lips. “You’ll be pleasantly surprised.”

“I’m sure I will,” Hannibal said and nodded at Will to try his. “Please, try them, let me know if I’ve captured the correct texture.”

“You made the dough?” Will asked, picking one up between two fingers and blew on it, powder flying everywhere, and then took a bite, sugar stuck to his nose and in his scruff as he chewed.

“I did,” Hannibal nodded, and gazed at Will as he took a bite.

“It’s really good,” the brunet insisted, wiping his nose of the sugar with the back of his hand as he stuffed the rest into his mouth.

Seeing Will stuff his face with beignets, sugar on his stubble, and a smile in his blue eyes made Hannibal happy in a way he had not felt in years. The feeling gripped him by a heart he thought had long since ossified to bone, and left him staring at Will before he reached up to brush powdered sugar from Will’s chin for him, then turned to pull two more from the oil with tongs. “What would you suggest drinking with a beignet?”

“Coffee,” Will murmured around a mouth full of sugar goodness, and dressed the new pastries with more powdered sugar. “It’s meant to be breakfast.”

“Really? Breakfast?” Hannibal chuckled with a raised eyebrow, as he watched WIll sprinkle sugar on the pastries. “With sausage or bacon, or on their own?”

“Usually on their own, but you could do eggs and bacon if you wanted, but they are filling,” Will chuckled, and took another, though full, he couldn’t help but want more.

Hannibal chuckled, and set about making more, quite happy to cook for Will if he enjoyed it this much. “I’ll have to keep that in mind.”

Aware of how rude he was being Will stopped himself short of licking the fried and sugary treat from his fingers. “But good at anytime of day, honestly. Places in New Orleans will make them all day.”

“When did you have them last?” Hannibal asked, as he pulled two more from the oil, happy to cook them all for Will, even if he was going to send some home with him.

“At least ten years,” Will replied, slowing down to sip his wine to get the sugar out of his mouth. No way could he eat all of these, or should.

“I’m glad I could bring back a pleasant memory. They are actually quite pleasant to smell, at least,” Hannibal said, and picked one up, uncertain how to eat it without making a mess.

With a gleam in his eyes, Will moved Hannibal’s hand with fingers on his wrist. “Just bite it. It’s supposed to be messy.” He urged Hannibal’s hand to his mouth.

Hannibal looked at Will, surprise in his amber eyes before he bit the puffed up dessert, and powdered sugar cascaded over his nose and jaw, decidedly undignified. He smiled, however, as he chewed, and nodded at the taste before he swallowed. “I may prepare these more often…”

Will grinned and brushed off some sugar from Hannibal’s nose and jaw. “They are good with chocolate syrup too. Just a drizzle.”

Hannibal leaned into Will’s touch, just a little, his eyes closing the same way the wolf’s eyes closed when Will petted him. “I’ll have to prepare some along with it next time,” he murmured with a sigh.

Will’s fingers lingered and then brushed some of Hannibal’s hair behind his ear, a familiar gesture, and then took his hand back. “Sounds good.” He grabbed another.

Hannibal opened his eyes slowly, like Will’s touch was a potent drug, and stared at Will with more gold in his irises than before. He sighed, and took another bite of the beignet, quite aware that he was bonded to the profiler in a profound way after such a short time.

Will smiled, powder all over his nose and chin, stuffed the pastry into his mouth, and licked a little of it from his fingers. “It was really nice of you to make these. Reminds me of home…”

Hannibal reached over and brushed the powder from Will’s nose for him. “I made an effort to make you feel at ease, I’m glad you liked it,” Hannibal murmured, closer to Will now, their fingers sugary. A fine coating of white surrounded them, like snow in the kitchen.

Will wiped his face with a laugh, forgetting just how irritated he might have felt before this altogether. “It worked.”

“Like magic?” Hannibal asked, and noticed a little sugar dusting Will’s eyelashes, which he thumbed off, only making it worse, and more beautiful at the same time.

Will’s breath hitched his throat when Hannibal did that, and found himself frozen to the spot, as if the powdered sugar were actual snow keeping him there. “Maybe…” he whispered.

Hannibal touched the side of Will’s cheek with his palm, streaking more white there as they stared at one another. “There is a certain amount of magic in the world, Will, more than most realize.”

“As real as werewolves?” he asked, teasing mostly, but was caught in Hannibal’s stare, his warm palm felt light and heavy at once against his own skin, and his heart started to pick up pace.

Hannibal didn't answer, just leaned in and pressed his lips against Will's, softly, as though asking permission with lips that tasted of beignets and wine. Will froze at first but then gripped Hannibal's shirt with one powdery fingered hand, and pulled him closer, head canted just so, and kissed him *back* .

Hannibal made a soft sound that hummed deep in his chest, and stepped closer to Will with a tilt of his head, and swept their tongues together, as he palmed Will's back with strong hands, heart pounding in his chest as blood rushed hard in his veins.

There was no denying their interest in one another after they flirted around it all evening, no matter how hard Will tried to disprove it to himself. He finally caved, slipping arms around Hannibal's neck, sliding his tongue against Hannibal's bottom lip.

A rush of absolute bliss swelled through Hannibal's body, and he all but picked Will up with both arms as they kissed, able to feel himself becoming addicted to Will with every brush of their lips. He had heard of this happening to people like him, but had never believed it would, until now.

Every brush of tongue and lips was slow, meaningful, as Will's eyes fluttered closed and took in Hannibal's scent and feelings, not just enduring his own want here, but Hannibal's as well, taking everything, blissfully overwhelming to be *wanted* in return.

Their mutual desire seemed to blend together until it was hard to tell where one stopped, and the other's began. Hannibal's hand slipped into Will's curls, and his fingers closed slowly, strong nails grazing against Will's scalp as he sucked at Will's lower lip, then his tongue.

Hannibal was stronger than he looked, and Will found that alluring, grasping his shoulders and then his forearms, feeling out every muscle, dying to see every part of him…
"Hannibal…" he managed to breathe between growing, heated, kisses.

Hannibal backed Will against one of the kitchen walls to kiss him there, his mouth moving down Will's jaw, under his chin, to the pulse in his throat, which Hannibal sucked and licked, then moved his mouth to Will's earlobe. "Will…" he breathed against the sensitive flesh, breathlessly.

Will ran his hand into Hannibal's hair, keeping get him just there, a spray of goosebumps over his skin. "God, you infuriate me and make me think of nothing but wanting to kiss you at the same time," Will whispered, honestly.

"I could say the same of your stubborn ill-tempered nature," Hannibal whispered back with another long, deep kiss to Will's lips as both hands swept down to Will's chest, palms roving over flannel.

Will found himself longing to be touched more, never more aware of how alone he'd been. "Perfectly matched," he groaned lightly, and kissed the doctor back. "Do you kiss many of your patients?"

Hannibal smiled against Will's lips, and kissed him back again at the question, absolutely intoxicated by him. "Never," he whispered, promising it with another kiss to Will's neck and

a spread of his hands over Will's chest before he dragged his palms down to Will's hips.

"Good." Will's hands shook slightly as he pressed them up Hannibal's shoulders, to his neck, thumb skimming his stubble on his jaw, rougher than most should be for the time of day.

Hannibal grunted at that, a feral sound for such a refined man, as he brushed his hands over Will's ass, slowly, then back up to the small of his back. He tilted his head back, letting Will caress him the way he'd hesitate to let anyone else look too closely. "I've got sugar all over you now," he whispered, aware that his apron was pressed against Will's chest.

The sound only aroused the brunet, skin tone deepening in red as he flushed, and kissed Hannibal again, hand snaking around to the back of his neck, resting there a moment before his fingers filed in through long strands of hair.

Hannibal moaned again, and his fingers went to the top of Will's shirt, undoing the buttons as they kissed hard enough to make their teeth click, Hannibal's a little sharper than Will's were. "Mmm," he groaned as he palmed Will's chest.

Will's tongue slid over the sharp teeth as he undid Hannibal's apron, breaking the kiss only long enough to remove it, and then pulled the other man close again by the hip. Will was quickly growing addicted to this, all of it, to Hannibal… The apron slid off with a puff of powdered sugar, and Hannibal cupped Will's face with both hands, tipping it up to kiss him more deeply as he began to walk him through the kitchen to the living room. His entire body was throbbing with a single pulse, making his hands shake and his voice deep and rough. "We'll have to wash everything," he purred, and undid the rest of Will's flannel shirt.

"Are you trying to get into my pants, doctor?" Will managed to tease, but his breathing was growing more rapid, swallowing hard as he all but bared himself to Hannibal, who had a vicious part to him Will was still trying to figure out.

Hannibal laughed softly, and peeled Will's shirt off with a tug of one hand in the fabric against Will's back. "A tad reductive, but perhaps I am …" Hannibal whispered against Will's ear before he began to kiss Will's bare shoulder, almost groaning at the smell and feeling of his bare skin.

"Just making sure," Will said, a tad nervous, flushed skin cooled now that he was exposed to the air, but Hannibal's mouth on him quickly kept him heated.

"You have doubts? Objections?" Hannibal whispered, as he kissed his way up Will's throat to bite very carefully at his pulse, while he slid his palms over Will's bare chest, around his waist, and up his back, memorizing every lean muscle.

"No, not yet," Will said, savoring the feeling of being worshiped, something he wasn't used to. "None for you either?"

"No, not at all," Hannibal said as he raised his head to look Will in the eye, then leaned closer to let their faces touch for a moment as his hands wandered over Will's chest, down to his hips, fingers trembling.

Will reached his own shaking hands to Hannibal's tie, and slipped it undone, slowly, and let it hang around his neck. It was so unprofessional of either of them, but Will knew it hardly mattered. His fingers diligently started to pluck buttons undone on Hannibal's dress shirt.

Professionalism was a long since abandoned notion. The pull he felt to Will was much, much deeper than anything he'd ever felt before, even deeper than the pull the moon held over him. Hannibal's chest was warm, and hairy, broad and stronger than his svelte form in tailored suits might suggest.

Taking a moment to take Hannibal in, Will palmed down his chest, and then back up, fingers carding through the thicket of hair as he kissed Hannibal again, slowly, purposefully. Hannibal pulled his own shirt off, and tossed it to the side as Will kissed him, then moaned when their bare chests pressed together, his own otherworldly heat wrapping around Will, embracing him just as tightly as Hannibal's arms did.

"I've… never been with a man," Will confessed, though it hardly stopped him from wanting, finding Hannibal utterly perfect, utterly entrancing. He bit his bottom lip and tugged between his teeth, sucking the flesh into his mouth with a moan.

Hannibal's hands paused against the smooth skin of Will's back, and he looked at Will with a little surprise when their lips parted. "Never?" He asked, honestly surprised that Will had never explored lust with another man.

Will needed connection, and since he didn't connect with many people, there was little room for exploration. His lust stemmed from knowing the person, not simply their physical attributes. "Never…"

"I'm an exception?" Hannibal whispered against Will's smooth, warm lips as he stroked his hand up the straight line of Will's spine, adoringly. This was far more than simple lust.

"Yes. I … I find you fascinating. You have dark corners that I want to explore, a puzzle," Will whispered against Hannibal's mouth softly.

Hannibal swallowed before he kissed Will's lips as though he was about to devour him for that, and lowered Will to the long, deep couch next to them. He laid over the brunet, and slipped one thigh between Will's legs, then ground it against Will's balls, slowly. "You believe you can solve me?"

"I want to," Will whispered as a groan escaped his mouth, his erection trapped tight in his khakis. He watched Hannibal above him, and palmed down his bare chest again, through all that hair.

"And when I am solved, will you be done with me?" Hannibal whispered, still grinding his thigh thigh between Will's thighs, slowly. Their hips rubbed together, showing that Hannibal was just as hard, throbbing through the smooth fabric of his dress pants as he kissed Will's throat.

"I don't think you'll ever be fully solved," Will gasped, swallowing hard as he tried to give control to Hannibal, wanting badly to strip them both down, but part of him wanted to run,

too… scared, afraid of being abandoned, hurt.

Hannibal undid Will's belt, and yanked it out of the loops with a smooth tug of his hand, then tossed it aside as he kissed Will's lips again. "Nor you, which is, perhaps, why we are suited to each other," Hannibal whispered, between kisses, and undid Will's pants.

"There's nothing to solve about me," Will said, jaw dropping with anticipation as Hannibal kept undressing him. Threadbare boxers were under his pants, cock straining against the button there, and tiny wet spot where precome had gathered and soaked through.

Hannibal looked down at Will's bulge, and stroked his warm fingers over the lines of his cock before he snapped the button off, and guided him out, then began to stroke him smoothly and slowly. "I beg to differ," he rasped in Will's ear.

Will's hips pressed up into Hannibal's palm, more pent up than he realized, not one to relieve himself for the sake of boredom or anything of that sort. Hannibal's hand was smooth and perfect. Will gripped his shoulders and pulled him down over him for another kiss. "I'll work harder on being a mystery."

Hannibal's hand was strong, stronger than most men's hands, but careful with Will at first. He stroked him slowly, and skimmed his thumb over the wet at the tip of Will's cock before he pulled back from the kiss to suck it from his skin with a sigh, and kissed Will again as he worked him over. Hannibal moved back without stopping, and peeled Will's pants off, down his toned legs, and off, along with his socks and shoes.

Completely naked now, Will stared up at Hannibal, exposed and vulnerable, just as he put himself in front of the wolf, trustingly. He didn't know why, but he trusted Hannibal completely. "You're wearing too much."

"Please, be my guest," Hannibal whispered as he kissed Will's jaw, and nuzzled him, unable to stop tasting Will's skin, or smelling him. He was ambrosia itself.

Will reached and undid Hannibal's pants, and then shucked them down his thighs, aware only now that the other man was not wearing underwear at all. Will swallowed, hands on Hannibal's hips, and then slid on to his cock, touching, experimentally.

Hannibal's breath hitched, and his head dropped forward at the touch. His cock was thick, and smooth, throbbing under Will's hand. "Will…" he moaned, again.

"Tell me what you like," Will whispered, leaning up to bit Hannibal's lobe, a side to himself he'd never let anyone see but the broad man over him.

Hannibal was so aroused by the feeling of Will touching him like that, by the profound lust that hammered through his body that he was speechless for a moment. All he could think was 'you', but it seemed like such a clumsy answer that he kissed Will again instead of saying it. "Just … like this, like this, Will… your hand is rough…"

Will twisted his fist around Hannibal's cock as he worked over with fluid snaps of his wrist, kissing him slowly. The longer they laid together like this, the longer they did this, the more

Will felt at ease in the situation. “That?”

“Yes,” Hannibal moaned, and arched his hips, driving himself into Will’s calloused palm as he squeezed Will’s cock. “Difficult to believe you’ve never … done this…”

“I know what feels good,” Will whispered back roughly, stroking fast, thumbing the tip where precome pooled.

Will’s hand was stoking a fire inside Hannibal, building it higher and higher. He bit Will’s throat, harder, and stroked him more quickly, matching their paces. His other hand moved to Will’s ass to knead at the perfectly round muscle, slowly. Will was utterly breathtaking.

The brunet’s own orgasm was just on the brink now, and his toes curled against the couch, head canted back into the soft cushions as Hannibal bit him. He groaned, pumping the doctor harder as his body tensed, sending him into a wave of pleasure that had him cursing under his breath.

Hannibal could smell Will’s impending orgasm, the rise of heat and pheromones leaking through his beautiful skin. “Will, yes,” Hannibal whispered, stroking Will harder and faster through it. Will came, and Hannibal moaned, unable to help but come with him at the smell and feeling of Will climaxing against his palm.

A moment later, Hannibal laid over Will like a heavy blanket, and wrapped his free arm around Will’s shoulders, holding him as they caught their breath. “You are … divine,” he whispered, against Will’s ear. It was no empty compliment, Will was *angelic* .

Sure the wine spurred him into it, Will just smiled wearily up at Hannibal, content and breathing hard, still coming down. “Never been called *that* .”

Hannibal laid to the side, and pulled a cashmere throw from the back of the sofa over them both. “That’s difficult to believe. You have angelic good looks, beneath the stubble and your glasses, which I suspect you don’t really need…”

“I didn’t wear them for a reason,” Will pointed out, curling to his side, to look at Hannibal and share the couch together.

The blanket was white, which made Hannibal’s skin look even more bronzed in contrast, and Will’s hair darker. Hannibal raked his fingers through Will’s curls, and stared at him. Stubble seemed to have surfaced on Hannibal’s chin over the last hour, giving him a rumpled, morning-after look.

“That is some impressive stubble,” Will pointed out, innocently, and run his knuckles over Hannibal’s face, gazing up at him.

Hannibal laughed as he settled his long arms around Will, holding him while his hairy chest pressed against Will’s. “It’s rather a chore. I have to shave at least twice a day.”

Another little thing to file away. Will rubbed his feet against Hannibal’s leg, feeling the coarse hair there as well, wrapping arms around Hannibal now, forehead to forehead, pressed

together. “And you like to be clean-shaven?”

“I prefer it, I think it a more elegant look than sporting a full beard, which I grow after approximately two days away from my razor,” Hannibal chuckled. He had never felt so utterly, completely content with anyone as he did with Will, and was loathe to let him leave tonight.

“It’s a terribly long drive back, would you care to stay the night?” Hannibal offered, softly.

It was late, and Will would have to drive all the way back, but he could do that in the morning. The dogs would be fine, he was sure of it. “Okay,” he said. Besides, it would let him delve a little deeper into Hannibal’s daily routine and everything in his house.

“Would you care to share a shower, in that case?” Hannibal offered, aware they were both covered in sweat and come. It would be unusual not to suggest it, to let Will guess that he enjoyed the smells, which he did. “Or a bath?”

“Share?” Will blinked; he barely shared anything with anyone, Hannibal was the first for a lot of things.

“My shower and my tub are large enough to accommodate two people. Of course, if you’re feeling shy…” Hannibal said, smirking a little.

“I’ve never bathed with anyone,” Will said, with a shrug, knowing it was now a challenge since Hannibal called him out on it. “Bath is fine.”

“Very well, it’s upstairs,” Hannibal sighed, reluctant to get off of the couch. They were both comfortable, and warm. He was quite happy just gazing at Will’s eyelashes.

Will crawled over Hannibal first, taking the throw with him, wrapped around his shoulder. “Coming?”

Hannibal sighed, and stood smoothly, utterly nude, and shameless. “Of course,” he answered, and bent gracefully to pick up their clothing, then showed Will to the staircase in the corner, which was decorated as tastefully as everything else in the house. “Follow me.”

Will took in everything, noticing that there was not one ounce of silver here at all, everything was another metal, or element all together. Will followed Hannibal up and once at the master bedroom with the bath, he dropped the blanket again.

Hannibal leaned over the bath, running water into a large copper soaking tub, then smiled up at Will as he dropped the blanket. “You are even more impressive without clothing than I imagined,” he whispered, winding both arms around Will.

“You imagined it?” Will asked, stretching his arms a little above his head. He wasn’t built, but he had a runner’s body, with sculpted thighs.

“Of course I did, I felt an undeniable attraction to you from the moment we were introduced,” Hannibal confessed, and traced his fingers down Will’s back, entranced by the contours of

Will's musculature. "No need to say you felt the same."

Will shrugged, shivering as Hannibal did that. "I did, but I also hated you. Mixed feelings, I tend to reside on the side of the negative reaction."

"Hated me?" Hannibal asked, a little wounded at the words. "Because I failed to accept the facade you've projected for Jack and the others you wish to keep at arm's length?"

"I hated that you got inside my head. It… scared me," Will said, honestly. "I.. I don't let people in there for a reason."

"I see nothing repellent in you," Hannibal assured Will, and walked him slowly to the tub, offering to allow Will to climb in first.

"I think you're the only one," Will said, lowering himself into the huge copper tub, scooting forward, well aware Hannibal would need more room for his long legs.

Hannibal climbed in, behind Will. The water was warm, and softly fragranced with a handful of salts, nothing overpowering. Hannibal draped his long legs on either side of Will's hips, and reached around Will to turn the gold plated tap to stop the water. "Perhaps that is a mutual phenomenon."

"Perhaps," Will said, leaning back against Hannibal's chest, the feeling strange, but comforting. "Even people who I think are my friends don't want more from me, they find me interesting but not as anything other than a topic of work."

Hannibal used his hands to rub Will's shoulders slowly as he kept both legs around him from behind. "They're remarkably short-sighted, in that case. It is a painful loneliness, to be the only wolf in a world of sheep."

"Alana is afraid of knowing too much and wanting to do a study on me, so she keeps it friendly, but … not," Will sighed, closing his eyes as Hannibal's fingers worked over extremely knotted and tense muscle.

"Alana Bloom?" Hannibal smiled, and worked his fingers around and into the knot in Will's muscle. "I can imagine her fascination with you…" A wave of jealousy began to rise at the edges of Hannibal's mind, irrational, feral possessiveness that he'd never felt for a person before.

"You know her?" Will asked, head tilted forward as Hannibal worked over his over used muscle.

"I was her adviser," Hannibal explained, and worked his thumbs into the muscle along Will's spine. "She's very agreeable. Most psychology departments are full of the personality deficient. Doctor Bloom is the exception."

"You know her well then," Will sighed, rubbing his hands up Hannibal's thighs, and then down again.

“Fairly well, yes,” Hannibal murmured in Will’s ear before he kissed it, and worked his hands down Will’s back.

Will hummed a groan as Hannibal did that, and he bent forward a little. “Ever date her?” Will asked, a bit of jealousy starting to ripple through him.

“Not precisely,” Hannibal said, with a distracted air, and kissed the top of Will’s spine. “Of course there were rumors we were having an affair while I advised her, but nothing of the sort happened.”

“So, what does ‘not precisely’ mean?” Will asked, tone growing into that gruff nature he was used to using, building walls and forts all over again. Hannibal nuzzled the back of Will’s neck, soothing him as he tucked his nose against Will’s ear, then caressed the shell of it with his lips. “I’m sure we both considered it, but never indulged. Alana is a remarkable woman, but simply not the one for me,” Hannibal said, with a tone that suggested deeper meaning than he let on to.

“You don’t strike me as fickle,” Will said, still rubbing his hands up and down Hannibal’s hairy legs, taking in bit of him, filing it away to memory. “She’s never mentioned you…”

“I am particular, and fussy about whom I allow beyond my own facade,” Hannibal explained as Will caressed his hairy legs, and he watched, amused. It felt good, even if he was not sure exactly what Will liked about it. Hannibal’s hands were so accustomed to his own hairy skin that they sought out the smooth and soft parts of Will: his shoulders, his back, the dip between his clavicles. “I suppose I am a romantic, against my better judgement,” he admitted, softly.

Will chuckled; “So you picked me?” He turned his head to look at Hannibal, leaning back so their eyes met. Stranger and stranger Doctor Hannibal Lecter was, and yet Will felt himself falling hard, despite all his eccentricities.

Hannibal smiled when Will looked back at him, and reached up to touch Will’s cheekbone with his hand. “I believe you were, on some level, chosen for me. I found you,” Hannibal murmured. He did his best to guard his heart, quite aware that Will did not feel the same sort of devotion he did … Will was not quite like Hannibal was, in some important respects.

“Found me? We met in Jack Crawford’s office,” Will explained, swallowing hard at the words though, every moment he got stuck gazing into Hannibal’s eyes, he knew it’d be harder to leave.

Hannibal blinked slowly when Will said that. He knew he’d have to tell Will the truth, but it was far too soon now. “As I said … I’m quite a romantic,” Hannibal sighed, then raked his wet hand through Will’s curls to wet them.

Will had an idea, of course, but tricking Hannibal into saying it, hadn’t worked, then again it wasn’t a set thing, not yet. “I guess you are. I’m… well you’ve probably guessed, I’m not much of one.”

“Romanticism requires hope. Hope requires vulnerability. You have an aversion to being vulnerable, in any sense of the word,” Hannibal observed, and started to wet Will’s hair, then reached for the shampoo.

“That is going to take some time. I like you, but letting you see my vulnerability will take time,” Will explained, closing his eyes as water dripped down his face.

“I am a man of great patience,” Hannibal promised, and began to work the rich shampoo into Will’s hair, working out grains of sand and bits of grit from … he was sure not even Will would know where.

“Might take some time,” Will sighed, putting his head back into Hannibal’s hands.

“I have time,” Hannibal assured Will as he washed Will’s hair, and took a deep breath of the smell of his clean throat when Will leaned back like that. It was even better than before now that Will’s skin was washed clean of the aftershave and warm.

In a bit of daze of what was happening, Will thought for sure he'd wake up soon, having had some erotic dream about his therapist. “You seem set on having me…” he said, uneasily.

“I am both patient and determined when I am certain of what I want, and yes, I am certain,” Hannibal murmured, then rinsed Will’s hair, and buried his nose in the wet strands as he held him.

Strange and yet frightening, Will wasn't sure which feeling was more prominent. He leaned his back into Hannibal’s chest. “It should be an interesting courtship.”

“If it were not intriguing, why in the world pursue it at all?” Hannibal asked, and worked conditioner between Will’s dark curls. “Life is too short for the mundane.”

Will huffed a laugh, eyes closed. “At least I’m not mundane.” Even he knew that someone like him was unusual, even if that was unfortunate.

“You are anything but mundane,” Hannibal agreed with a kiss to the side of Will’s ear, then traced his hand over Will’s chest, slowly. “I am not usually the sort to become attached to anyone so quickly. My fondness of you is nearly embarrassing.”

“What? You mean you don’t take baths with all the people you have over for dinner?” Will asked, teasingly, moving his head enough to meet Hannibal’s gaze, no issue now in making eye contact with him since they’d grown close quickly.

“No, not quite all,” Hannibal said, dryly, and enjoyed the view of Will’s river blue eyes. “Nor do I try to prepare their favourite childhood dessert in an attempt to charm them.”

A small smile crept over Will’s lips at that, and he laid his head back on Hannibal’s shoulder, touching his scruffy jaw, turning his face toward his own to kiss him, already addicted. “Good to know,” he whispered.

Hannibal kissed Will, slowly, letting the curves of their lips brush each other before he leaned in and stroked his tongue over Will’s lower lip, then gave it a gentle bite. “Do you bathe with

everyone from whom you accept a dinner invitation?" Hannibal whispered, smirking.

"No one invites me to dinner, for one," Will said quietly, "and no, I don't." Hannibal was a growing exception to a lot of things, far too many if Will really thought too long about it.

"You've been a charming guest so far," Hannibal smiled as he guided Will back, head into the water to rinse the conditioner from his curls for him with slow brushes of his fingers. Will's hair fanned out in the water, dark and soft, like a black halo around his face.

It took a lot of trust for Will, but he found he had put himself into the doctor's capable hands, if only because it was within his instincts to do just that. Hannibal had a dangerous side, one that Will was hungry to figure out, though, however. Once the conditioner was out he moved back up and wiped hair from his eyes. "Charming?"

"I have not been bored or needed to resort to small talk for a single moment with you. I feel as though we have already known each other for some time," Hannibal said, and reached around Will to pull the plug in the tub, then climbed out and handed Will a thick, navy blue towel.

Will stood, taking the towel, and wrapped it around his hips, curls sopping wet. "I don't really do small talk anyway," he chuckled, stepping out carefully.

"A refreshing change from my usual dinner guests," Hannibal said as he used another towel to blot at Will's curls, then kissed his lips again, unable to resist.

And Will didn't want Hannibal to resist, pulling him in for a longer kiss, getting used to feel of their lips together, the way their bodies seem to fit perfectly like puzzle pieces. "Your usual?"

"I have dinner parties. I enjoy preparing them much more than I enjoy attending them," he chuckled, and rested his profile against Will's with a sigh.

"I'll be sure not to attend," Will added with a short smile. "No offense."

Hannibal laughed before he tossed the towel from Will's hair into the hamper, and took a white towel to wrap around his own hips. "I might enjoy them if you did…"

"I think we'd both be miserable," Will suggested and walked out into Hannibal bedroom, which was larger than his whole living room.

"We could steal away, and distract one another," Hannibal suggested with a sly grin as he let Will look over his immaculate bedroom, then lit the fireplace to cast a warm glow over the bed. He peeled back the sheets for Will, and pulled him into another kiss.

"Tempting," Will said, his gaze back on Hannibal the second he was taken back into his arms, kissing him slowly, tasting him. "Your bedroom is nicer than my whole house."

"Thank you," Hannibal murmured, against Will's lips as he sank one knee into the soft bed, then pulled Will into it. "I am particular about my surroundings."

“Clearly,” Will said, letting his body hit the soft mattress and fine linens, much nicer than anything he’d ever owned in his whole life. He stripped his towel off and tossed it.

Hannibal watched Will as he sank into the luxurious bed, like he was memorizing the sight, then climbed in with him, over him, after tossing his own towel to the side. He straddled Will’s hips, and laid over him, one elbow on either side of Will’s head. “As fine as my bed may be, I think it is improved with you in it.”

“You’ve been lacking, then, if you think I’ve improved anything,” Will whispered, warmed through from the fire place and Hannibal’s body nearly encasing him completely. His hands rested on Hannibal’s hips, unsure where else to put them.

The weight of Will’s hands there felt perfect, like Hannibal had been waiting years for them, trying different hands, different touches, and none of them … fit. “I’m beginning to think I was lacking, before we met. The world has become much more interesting with you in it, Will.”

It was difficult for Will to accept that anyone would want him so wholeheartedly, and so soon after meeting them. He liked Hannibal, even if his first impression was not a good one, Will knew he had a habit of blowing up at the bit. His brows knit together softly, his gaze far off off for a moment. “Why is that?”

Hannibal hesitated, as though weighing a decision, carefully, before he spoke. “I find most of the people I meet very dull, more like sheep than people, if I am to be blunt. I am capable of managing polite interest, of course, but it is a relief to look across the flock and find eyes as sharp as my own looking back at me.”

“A sharp wit,” Will commented, gazing up at Hannibal as his eyes refocused on his dark amber eyes, moreso beautiful looking in the low light from the fireplace. “Kindred spirits?”

“Kindred spirits of a very unusual sort,” Hannibal agreed, and touched Will’s drying curls, still staring at him with wonder.

There was still not saying how kindred they were, but Will could feel it, whether his intuition was right or not, it could not deny what he was feeling. “They are, if not rare.”

“There are forces in the world larger and more mysterious than man alone,” Hannibal said, as he laid next to Will, facing him as they spoke. Everything was sharper, more clear, better with Will around. Food was more delicious, colors richer …

“How so?” Will asked, rolling to his side, to keep their eye contact, never letting it falter, too attracted, too… *attached* . Will felt like there was hook in his heart, and he was reeled in slowly.

“Have you ever witnessed anything of what most would call a supernatural nature, Will?” Hannibal asked, softly, with his palm resting against Will’s back, able to feel the beating of his heart against it.

“I’ve… witnessed a lot. What constitutes supernatural behavior?” Will asked, aware that they were again going into this topic, as though Hannibal were readying him for news that would come to light at some point soon.

"Phenomenon most would consider mythological, or the result of some divine punishment, perhaps,” Hannibal mused, as he hooked one leg over Will’s leg. They were tangled, comfortably.

“Knowingly? Not that I know of. Perhaps the wolf, that was unusual, but was it supernatural?” Will gave a one shoulder shrug, pulled closer as Hannibal’s leg went over his hip, resting their faces together.

Hannibal’s eyes closed as Will pulled closer, and sighed. It wasn’t even sex Hannibal wanted from Will tonight. Will had never been with a man, he seemed flighty at times. Hannibal did not want to scare Will off. Being close like this, talking without barriers between them was … intimate, beautiful. “Instinct is the sum total of every experience we’ve ever had, good or bad, filed away in our subconscious to guide us. What does your instinct tell you, Will?”

“That it was… unusual,” Will whispered, as though keeping it between them. It was strange to be in another man’s bed, naked and sharing covers, but at the same time it felt natural, like snuggling one of his dogs.

“And yet, had an air of the predestined about it? As though fate and circumstance had lead you to that moment with the creature?” Hannibal asked, and neatened Will’s curls with one hand. The conditioner had left them silky and shiny.

“It’s possible, if one believed in fate,” Will said, a man of facts, but he was also a man who lived in dreams, often, wavering between them.

“Do you believe in fate, Will?” Hannibal asked, with a touch of the tip of his regal nose against Will’s angelic one.

“I don’t know what I believe in,” Will whispered, swallowing thickly as their gazed into each others’ eyes, well aware that it was likely fate that brought them to this point.

“I believe I would like to have you in my bed more often,” Hannibal whispered, nuzzling Will softly as he spoke.

“I believe I could make that happen, sometimes.” Will let their noses slide together and their lips brush, just softly.

“Sometimes?” Hannibal whispered, and pulled Will even closer with a slow, hot press of his lips against Will’s.

“I can’t-” Will started to reply, caught up in the feel of Hannibal’s lips against his tongue, “I can’t live here…”

“Of course not,” Hannibal said, well aware Will would never enjoy urban life, no matter how splendid the house. Hannibal nipped, and sucked at Will’s tongue, slowly.

“Once a week?” the brunet offered between slow sucks of tongue and lips, distracted now as their conversation become taken over by simple *need* .

“Three times a week,” Hannibal negotiated, and pulled Will over him in bed, then kissed the underside of his jaw.

This time, Will straddled Hannibal, hip to hip, and leaned down with on his forearms, head tilted back. Familiarity with the situation washed over him, even if he’d never had this, and never done this with anyone, especially not the man below him. It felt natural, predestined even. “Nights I have to be in Quantico early the next day,” he offered back.

“Very well,” Hannibal whispered, as he ran his palms over Will’s chest, then dragged his nails back down Will’s skin, marking him lightly as he made Will’s nipples go stiff.

“You thought Buster didn’t like you before,” Will teased, and then gasped the sensation sending shrills of lust down his spine. He kissed Hannibal’s chin, and then his lips.

“You don’t want to leave your dogs overnight?” Hannibal asked, and kissed Will with a groan as he felt Will shiver a little against him.

“Have you ever left six dogs locked up in a house before for longer than twelve hours?” Will asked against Hannibal’s mouth, trying not to get worried at that exact moment, since he hadn’t prepared to stay tonight.

Hannibal looked at Will, able to see his worry, and kissed him again. “I have not.” Hannibal pulled back just enough to speak more clearly. “Would you like me to come home with you tonight?”

Will could be *that* date, or he could for once be normal. God, when was he ever normal? He’d just ruined a very nice, intimate moment. “They should be fine until morning…”

“Very well, but if you think you would be more at ease at home, by all means, the night is young,” Hannibal said, stroking one hand through Will’s curls, adoring the way they sprung back.

“I’ll have to leave early,” Will insisted, letting the moment be gone now, and instead rested half off of Hannibal, his limbs still around him, head against the crook of his neck.

“What a shame,” Hannibal whispered, and arched his neck back when Will rested his head there, utterly content.

Will closed his eyes and let his mind drift, ever slowly, into the dreamworld as he focused on Hannibal’s breathing. “I’ll have to... skip breakfast.”

Hannibal sighed, and felt Will begin to relax, sinking into sleep as he lay over his chest. Hannibal followed Will, holding him, and drifted off. An hour later, the bed shook a little, as though a wild animal was under it, rattling the foundations.

Will’s mind was in a state of dreaming, vividly, chasing the killer he was hunting around the woods, and tripped, fell, when the bed outside of his mind shook. He startled awake,

sweating, gripping Hannibal's arm.

Hannibal was asleep, but kicking like a dog under the covers as he dreamed, and held Will with one arm, as though he was running with Will, from something.

"Hannibal," Will murmured, not sure what was going on, but he tried to wake the man gently, not wanting to startle him.

Hannibal opened his eyes, and his limbs stopped moving. "Will…" he murmured, still half asleep, and curled around him, almost like a large dog might lay curled around Will in bed, his head against Will's chest.

Will shifted, holding Hannibal to him, and stroked his fingers through his hair, as though petting him back into a slumber. "Never mind," he replied groggily. "Go back to sleep."

"Is everything alright?" Hannibal murmured, his voice deeper than usual, and rougher, only half awake. Hannibal's shoulder relaxed at Will's touch, and he heaved a heavy sigh.

"Yeah, s'fine," Will murmured, slurred words together as his mind drifted again.

Hannibal re-settled, still curled around Will, and fell asleep again, holding Will a little possessively as he slumbered, as though afraid Will would be torn away in the night.

In the morning, Hannibal was out of bed at the first light of dawn, and brought a tray up from the kitchen for Will. He set it on the edge of the bed, and touched Will's arm, then kissed his bare shoulder.

Will stirred, opening his eyes, aware it was light out now, and he had meant to be up before now, to get home to the dogs and then back out for work. "Time is it?"

"You said you would have to skip breakfast, I cannot allow that, as a doctor," Hannibal nodded, and sat on the bed, wrapped in a deep red robe. "How did you sleep?"

Will blinked, eyes adjusting to Hannibal's appearance and sat up . "I would have gotten something at home." He stretched, pulling blankets to his waist. "Aside from your running dream last night, I felt okay."

"Running dream?" Hannibal asked as he handed Will his cup of coffee, and licked his lips as he looked at Will, barechested and still rumpled from sleep in his bed.

"Yeah, moving like you had been running," Will said, taking the coffee, and sipping it. He reached his free hand and ran his hand through the thicket of chest hair, up to his neck and face. "You weren't kidding."

Hannibal arched a little at the touch, his lips curving into a smile as he leaned his scruffy face against Will's hand. He looked as though he had grown the beginning of a salt and pepper beard overnight. "I was not, I become quite unkempt if I do not shave every morning, and again after work. I'm sorry if my sleeping habits kept you awake."

“Only woke once,” Will admitted, “Surprised my sleep habits didn’t wake you.” Actually, he was surprised he had slept as well as he did. Will dropped his hand and sipped the coffee. “What’s for breakfast?”

Hannibal pulled the copper lid off of a plate of eggs, sausage, and some beignets. “Eggs Benedict, apple-maplewood smoked sausage, and of course, beignets.”

“You’ve been up a while,” Will sighed, taking up a fork to eat quickly, he didn’t want to leave the dogs longer than he should, and he’d be late for class, either way.

“I am an early riser,” Hannibal said as he sipped his own coffee, and took his own plate from the tray to eat, always hungry, especially after sleeping. “Was there anything else peculiar I did in my sleep last night?”

“You curled in against me, otherwise no.” Will cracked open his pastry and stuffed the sausage and egg inside of it, and ate it like a sandwich.

“Curled against you?” Hannibal asked, and watched Will eat with fascination, never having considered stuffing the beignet. He wondered if that was a regional custom … or just Will.

Definitely just Will, used to eating on the run if he had to. He took a large bite and nodded his head. “I pet your hair, you went back to sleep.”

“Rather like a dog…” Hannibal mused, with a soft, bemused smile on his lips before he sipped his coffee again, and let the steam tendril around his high cheekbones.

“You could say that,” Will mused, a slight narrowing of his eyes on Hannibal, knowingly. Everything was starting to add up, even if those facts lead to more science fiction than factual, he couldn't deny evidence.

Will finished his food and set his coffee down. His clothes were placed over a chair in the corner, where he went to put them on, boxers first.

Hannibal watched Will dress, memorizing every curve and plane of his body, well aware he would be sketching Will for days. “I envy your students.”

“Why is that?” Will asked, looking over his shoulder as he pulled on his pants and the slid his shirt over his shoulders.

“I’m sure you can imagine,” Hannibal said with a soft smirk, and stood to walk over to Will, buttoning his shirt for him.

Will glanced up at Hannibal, standing a little straighter when he got closer to help. “I can't, actually.”

“It must be quite something to be given licence to stare at and listen to you for an hour, or two. I’m certain you’re the object of many a student infatuation,” Hannibal said, sincerely, and fixed Will’s rambling curls with a stroke of his fingers.

Will raised both brows skeptically with surprise. “Hardly. They're my students, FBI agents to be,” Will offered, resting his hands at Hannibal said slim waist, taking in his ragged, hairy form.

Hannibal’s robe gaped open, showing off his chest as Will looked him over. He smiled, and pulled Will closer by his waist, to kiss him. “None of those things render them immune to a handsome professor.”

“There are better looking professors that myself,” Will insisted, pressing against Hannibal, running his hands up his chest, unable to get enough.

“I doubt that very much,” Hannibal hummed, as his hands moved over Will’s ass, pulling him closer for another, deeper kiss.

Will hummed against Hannibal’s mouth, caught between stripping down and staying and realizing he *had* to get home to the dogs. “I'm going to be late if I don't head home now…”

“Very well,” Hannibal sighed,and pressed another kiss to Will’s lips, sweet and long before he made himself pull away. “You are difficult to say goodbye to.”

“It's not like you won't see me again,” Will replied, nipping Hannibal’s bottom lip once. “You're my paddle, remember?”

“So I am,” Hannibal sighed, and did his best to suppress his instinct to keep Will with him. He kissed Will again with one hand against the back of Will’s neck, then took his hand and walked downstairs with him.

Once down, Will slipped into his boots, walking with Hannibal to the door, which was down and out of the house portion and into the waiting area of his office. Will kissed Hannibal chastely one last time.

“I’ll text you later?” Will asked, a tad awkward.

“Of course, I’ll see you soon,” Hannibal said smoothly, and tried to ignore the gnawing feeling in his chest at the thought of Will leaving.

Will scratched the back of his head and then turned, a boyish smile on his face, as he made his way down the steps and to his car again, to drive home.

Chapter 4

Chapter by beforethedawn, Destinyawakened

As he had suspected, being without Will was painful. Hannibal felt the expected ache in his chest, and did his best to keep his mind occupied, but instinct was stronger than intellect in this case.

He made his way to Quantico, and waited in the back of the classroom amongst the students, where he was certain Will would not notice him.

Professor Graham was talking about the recent attacks, showing bloody slide after bloody slide, never once looking up at his students, but let the darkness in the classroom hide him mostly in shadow.

“The wounds are consistent with animal claws and teeth,” Will said, pointing at the markings on screen with a red pointer pen. He went on to explain how it couldn’t be a human, no matter what he’d discussed with Hannibal or Jack, he just couldn’t believe that, but nor could he believe a wolf would act in such a way alone. He asked his students to think of ways or reason why a wild animal would have such behavior patterns, write a paper on it due Friday, and then dismissed them.

Hannibal stared at the photos on the screen, as transfixed by the tooth and claw markings as he was by Will. The savagery of the crime scenes was … strangely beautiful. Spatters of red against tree trunks and stone, bones chewed through by powerful jaws. It was poetic and grisly at once.

Hannibal watched Will, from the back of the room, and tilted his head as Alana let herself in.

Will looked up at her, expectantly.

“Good class,” she said, “I caught the end.”

“Did you?” Will asked, pushing his glasses up the bridge of his nose, the lights still dimmed, the image still up on the wall, the only light in the room. “Jack would disagree.”

“Jack doesn’t agree that it’s a wolf?” she asked, with her head tilted at the bloody carcass on the screen. “A … really big wolf?”

“Jack doesn’t agree that it could be a wolf acting on it’s own,” Will reiterated, a cant to his head as he gestured. “Wild creatures will do a lot of damage, but Jack seems to think it’s too … planned.”

“So either you’re looking at someone using a wolf, or … a wolf capable of planning?” Alana asked, standing a little closer to Will, shoulder to shoulder as they looked at the screen.

“A wolf doing more than just what his instinct tells him to do. A very smart beast,” Will offered, looking up at the large screen. “Who could control an animal like that? No human.”

Alana folded her arms over her chest, and then reached to touch Will’s shoulder, lightly. “How did things go with Doctor Lecter?”

A warm smiled kept across Will’s face, and he swallowed first. “Perfectly. He’s… not so bad.”

“You don’t mind him? I was hoping maybe he’d be wise enough to …” Alana gestured with a smile, “well, to get along with you.”

“Oh…” Will sighed, nodding his head, “we got along just fine.”

Alana seemed surprised, Will even seemed to *like* Doctor Lecter. “Wow. I was just hoping you wouldn’t snap at him and storm out of the room…”

“Well, to be fair, I did the first time. Jack sprung him on me,” Will explained, arms crossed over his chest, casually, as he leaned back against his desk where the projector sat.

“Jack has a lot to learn,” Alana sighed, and watched as Will leaned against his desk. “So, you stormed out on him … and then?”

Hannibal watched from the back, fascinated by this stolen view into Will’s honest opinion of him. He watched, as quietly as a ghost in the dark.

“He came over to my *house* the next morning with already made food. To apologize,” Will said, shrugging a little as he looked at Alana, aware of what Hannibal had said about her, and now, Will no longer saw her with potential either, just a friend. “We had breakfast. I let the dogs out, and agreed to see him for a session… and then dinner.”

“Dinner? You went to dinner with someone? Willingly? That’s … amazing, actually. He’s quite a chef. He cooked for a group of students once, it was an experience,” she smiled. “What did you have?”

“Uh, roast and potatoes, veggies,” Will said, shrugging. “And dessert.” Will waved one hand nonchalantly.

“Wow, that sounds pretty basic for him,” Alana mused, and arched an eyebrow at Will who seemed like he was trying to play it cool. “He must have been trying to impress you, in a roundabout way.”

“I think he was trying not to overwhelm me,” Will corrected. “I live in the middle of nowhere with a bunch of dogs. Simplicity would seem to be best.” Will liked food, he just didn’t know how to make much more than the very simplest dishes.

“Yeah? So what was dessert?” Alana asked, with a little smile, curious now.

“Beignets,” Will said, quietly. “Something I grew up with. Puffed pastry, fried, powdered sugar dusted.”

“If I didn’t know better, I’d say he was really trying to impress you …” Alana mused, and watched Will’s expression. “Did you like it?”

“I did. He went through a lot of trouble. It was… nice. I’ve never had someone try for my attentions before,” Will stated, out loud, before he realized what he said.

“Your … attentions?” Alana asked, eyebrows raised, surprised.

Another flush kept over Will’s neck and to his cheeks. “I…” Will stopped himself, he couldn’t tell her. “It’s just nice that someone’s taken to trying to figure out my interests.”

“I … see…” Alana said, and smiled at the flush on Will. She’d never seen that before, not even the very few times she managed to get Will to flirt a little with her. “How do you feel about that? You obviously don’t seem to mind…”

“ *Now* you’re taking an interest?” Will teased, reaching behind him to turn off the projector. He moved to the lights on the wall to flick them back on.

“I never said I didn’t have an interest. I’m just curious about how you feel about Hannibal Lecter, of all people, wooing you.” Hannibal moved swiftly, to stand behind a pillar, still listening.

“‘Wooing’ me?” Will laughed, scratching the back of his neck. “We get along. There’s… something there. It’s comfortable. Different but not.”

“Well … congratulations, I suppose?” Alana asked, with a soft shrug, and gave Will a wistful look. “Maybe it’s for the best.”

“For the best?” Will asked, curiously, canting his head at her.

“Well,” she said, gesturing between them. “It’s okay, never mind. I should really get going, I have to see Jack.”

“What did you mean?” Will asked, getting in front of her, eyes narrowed, dark and bright all at once.

Alana blushed, and spread her hands, embarrassed. “I always thought maybe someday there might be something between us, to be honest, but … “

“ *Us* ? You and I?” Will asked, brows raised. He’d always thought but never guessed Alana actually wanted to be with him. “You always seemed indifferent because of… well me being me.”

“I was … cautious,” she admitted, and shook her head. “Doesn’t matter now anyway.”

Will decided not to say anything about staying the night at Hannibal’s, just nodded instead. “I’m not a… wild animal.”

“There … is something a little wild about you,” Alana said, gently. “Not wild as in dangerous but … not quite socialized, if that makes sense.”

“I don’t like being social,” Will said, shaking his head. “Did Jack send you?”

“He wants to see you upstairs, yes,” Alana said, as her smile faded a little.

Will sighed, and gathered his things, his coat, his satchel. “Tell him I’ll be there soon.”

“Sure…” Alana said, a little deflated now, and showed herself out, closing the door behind her. Hannibal stayed behind the large pillar, having heard and seen everything.

Will turned off his laptop and then shut the lid and gathered the rest of his things into his satchel and put it on over his shoulder. He shut the lights off again and walked out, toward the stairs to go find Jack.

Hannibal waited until Will had left, then used another exit, and walked around the corner toward where Will had gone, a file in hand filled with papers. “Will? Already out of class?” he asked, as though surprised.

Will paused at his name and then looked over at Hannibal, a smile growing on his face. “For now. One class down. Now I’m off to see what Jack wants.” He paused. “What are you doing here?”

Hannibal’s long, elegant trenchcoat hung off of his shoulders, accented by a cognac colored cashmere scarf that brought out his eyes, perfectly. “It seems they require original copies of a few documents to process my clearance, for the eventuality that I will accompany you to crime scenes,” he said, smiling at Will.

“Oh,” was all Will managed to get out, looking Hannibal over subtly. Will had changed into a nicer plaid shirt, solid colored tie, still in khakis. He hung back with Hannibal just a bit longer, gazing at him.

Hannibal gazed back, with a new brightness to his dark eyes. “How was class?” he asked, after a moment of mutual longing. He wanted, more than anything, to pull Will into his arms and kiss him deeply, to mark him, make him *his*.

“It was good. Nice to have a good rest before it, for once,” Will chuckled, nodding toward the stairs. “Going up?”

“I am,” Hannibal said, and headed to the stairwell with Will. He looked calm but his heart was still pounding from watching Alana flirt with Will, and Will decide not to take her up on it. He opened the door, and held it for Will, eyes locked on him.

Will was ever faithful, and though they had just started to date, his heart was in Hannibal’s hands. He went through first, the stairs were empty, students on to their next classes.

Hannibal listened carefully for other footsteps in the stairwell, and heard none. The second the door closed, he caught Will by his waist, turned him and pulled him into a deep, passionate kiss. Immediately, Will’s hands cupped Hannibal’s high cheekbones, and kissed him back, tugging him in closer as their tongues slid, the longing in his bones melting away, replaced with burning desire.

Hannibal groaned, softly, and pressed Will against the wall, head tilted, lips locked as he wound their tongues together and allowed all the feral, irrational passion he'd felt watching Will lecture to translate itself into the fiery kiss. Will's back hit with a soft thump, and his hand roved down to rest on Hannibal's chest. The thumping of Hannibal's heart was heavy under Will's hand.

"Hannibal-" Will managed out between kisses, catching his ragged breath. He bit Hannibal's bottom lip softly, touching get his scruffy jaw as their noses brushed.

The bite spurred Hannibal on, and he fisted the back of Will's shirt as he dropped his mouth to Will's neck, just under his collar, and bit him slowly, sucking and working the flesh over with his tongue as he moaned. It only made the brunet under Hannibal writhe a little, between Hannibal's broad form and the door, hand tight in the front of his shirt as he silently begged for it harder. Will had never felt so possessed in his life with need or want for anyone before as he was with Hannibal.

One hand went to cup Will's ass, squeezing the firm flesh hard as Hannibal ground his hips against Will, both of them hard through their pants as he bit harder, and sucked, lathing his tongue over and around the growing bruise. Will's skin smelled like heaven, and tasted even better.

Heavy panting and groaning filled the small staircase as Will wound his arm around Hannibal's shoulders, gripping his hair at the back of his head. His body one large pulse at this point, heated, and throbbing as friction rolled between them. "Can… can you come over tonight?"

"Yes," Hannibal growled against Will's hair, and kissed his lips again as the hand in Will's shirt moved to his soft hair, clenching in the curls as they ground together like helplessly turned on teenagers.

Will gasped against Hannibal's mouth, feral emotions taking him over, and he wasn't sure if it was *him* or Hannibal. All the professor knew was that he needed everything about Hannibal. "I missed you," he whispered, dropping one hand to Hannibal's hip, and slipped it around to the front, grinding his palm against the hard outline of his length.

"I missed you," Hannibal gasped, his hair falling out of it's neat coif, into his eyes.

Will gazed up at Hannibal, his own hair messed up now where he had tried to brush it before work. He palmed Hannibal over and over, the older man all hunched up against Will, pinning him to the wall.

The door two stories up opened and closed, and a pattering of footsteps followed.

Hannibal gasped against Will's mouth, grinding slowly against his palm. He could hear the approaching steps, and forced himself to step back, then nodded up at the stairs over them before he stole a last, quick kiss. Will licked his lips and attempted to right himself as another professor skipped down the steps and nodded to Will in passing. The man left, out the door Will and Hannibal had come.

Will laughed, biting the inside of his cheek. “That was close…”

“Very,” Hannibal agreed, and fixed Will’s collar for him with both hands, then smoothed his shirt down, in front. “What time shall I come by?”

“Anytime. I'll be home after four,” Will said, the throb in his neck blissful, a reminder from Hannibal of just *who* Will was with now.

“Then I will see you shortly after,” Hannibal whispered, and kissed Will’s pink, warm lips, worn smooth by friction.

Not wanting it to end so soon, Will gripped Hannibal again by the shirt and kissed him harder, leaving them both dizzy and breathless, panting. “Okay. I’ll promise some whiskey and a fish dinner, but that’s all I have.”

“I’ll make due,” Hannibal whispered and kissed Will back, dragging their tongues together as he cupped his face with one hand.

Will breathed in Hannibal’s scent as they kissed again, and again, until he finally let go, swallowing. “Okay, gotta go before Jack starts yelling.”

“You may be too late,” Hannibal whispered, and fixed Will’s curls. “I will see you tonight.”

Will smiled, took a deep breath, and nodded. “Okay.” He reluctantly let go of Hannibal and started back up the steps, to the second floor.

Hannibal watched Will as he made his way back up the stairs, appreciating the view as Will climbed the stairs before he let himself out to head home. He had a patient to see before he could drive out to Wolftrap.

Will pushed open the door to the second floor and let himself into Jack’s office, shutting the door behind them. “Got caught up with a student…”

“Sit down. Do you have anything else you can give us?” Jack asked, bluntly.

“I did some researching, like you asked, and there’s a young man named Randall Tier, very into the mechanics of animals, works at the museum...” Will offered, even though he was quite aware that Randall was likely not their guy, it would give Will more time. “Worth looking into.”

Jack leaned across the desk, interested, and wrote down the name. “What makes you think Tier is our guy?”

“He has a background. I can’t confirm it, his records are confidential, but he was checked into an institute when he was younger, psychotic episodes. He was treated and released.”

“He’s the type to think of attacking people with an animal or … some animal-like mechanism?” Jack asked, shifting his shoulders.

“He's the type to think he *is* an animal, so *he* attacks. I'm not saying he is, I'm just saying we have to look into him, too,” Will suggested. “It's the best lead we have.”

“How, exactly, did you find this lead?” Jack asked, pen in hand, taking notes to run down the lead, question him.

“In my talks with Doctor Lecter, he mentioned there were people like this, and he’d treated one once. He didn’t give me a name, just the idea to look for it,” Will said, pacing the room a little.

“And where is Randall Tier these days?” Jack asked, as he watched Will pace back and forth like a wild thing indoors for the first time.

“Museum of Natural History. He works on the dinosaurs, mostly,” Will said, stopping to look directly at Jack. Even if it was Tier, Will had a feeling he was just as dangerous as their killer animal, if not more so.

Jack tapped his fingers against the desktop, and looked at his watch. “We’ll go tomorrow, and take a little tour, nothing official. We don’t have anything close to enough for a warrant, but I’d like to see what his work is like, and I want you to get a read on him.”

Will sighed. So much for sleep overs and sleeping in. “Sure. Name the time. Anything else?” Will was starting to get a headache, the dull throb ached through his skull.

“Noon, we’ll get a good look around while he’s on lunch, talk to a few of his coworkers, then work our way to him. That’s it for now unless you get something new,” Jack said, decisively.

“I’ll let you know if I do,” Will said, showing himself out. He had twenty minutes until his next class.

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Will popped four aspirin on the way home, and drove with the sun blaring right into his face. The drive was long, but by the time he got there, he was happy to be home tonight and with his dogs. He parked, and let them out, watching them run around him as he set out their homemade food in a few dishes for them, and then went to get the fish started, nothing fancy, just roasted in the oven, and some rice boiling on the stove.

An hour later, enough time to allow Will to relax and settle in after getting home, Hannibal pulled up in the gravel drive, and stepped out with a bag over his shoulder and a smile. Buster started to bark first, jumping at the door as Hannibal approached.

Will had the rice in a bowl to cool a little, but still hot, buttered and salted. The fish was cleaned and roasted, and put on a serving plate, and he put together a rough chopped salad. On hearing the dogs, he went to the door, pushing the screen open.

Hannibal smiled as he climbed the steps to the porch, and stepped inside to kiss Will hello, one hand against his cheek. Will had taken his ugly tie off, a few buttons now undone, but he

wore an undershirt beneath. He palmed Hannibal's chest and as they kissed softly, a warm glow lighting up Will's cheeks and eyes.

"Glad you made it," Will whispered.

"As am I," Hannibal murmured, and kissed Will again before he set down his bag for the dogs to sniff all over, eagerly. "How was your meeting with Jack?"

"Short and sweet. Meeting him at the Museum of Natural History tomorrow around noon. Lead for the case, for now," Will said, moving away from the door to let Hannibal enter and make himself at home. The placed had been vacuumed a bit, and the couches cleaned just a little bit with a fur mit.

Hannibal looked around and noticed the tiny little details of Will's attempt to make his home more suitable, and smiled. "A single lead is better than none at all. Would you like me to accompany you?"

"That won't be odd for you? We're going to talk to a patient you treated once," Will said, letting the screen door close, dogs barking in a distance.

"Perhaps he would be more amenable to speaking with me," Hannibal offered, and undid his long coat before he pulled it off, and hung it on a coat rack, neatly.

"Maybe. But he trusts you and for us to be there… I wouldn't want him to think you told me, which you didn't," Will said, taking a deep breath as he looked at Hannibal. "Are you hungry?"

"Always," Hannibal said, honestly, and took a deep breath. "It smells lovely, I brought a bottle of wine, of course, I hope you don't mind."

"A white I'm hoping? I cooked light," Will said, shrugging toward the dish on the counter of the breakfast bar.

Hannibal crouched to retrieve the still chilled bottle from his leather bag, and stood to present it to Will. "A Fiano from Italy, something I'm sure will complement your catch. I was not certain what sort of fish you were preparing, I had to guess," Hannibal said, as he handed over the old, expensive looking bottle to Will, graciously.

"This should be fine," Will said, taking the bottle. He set it down and got the cork screw out and opened it, pouring the liquid into two glasses and set them out on each setting he'd done up. Nothing fancy. He then scooped rice and fish onto the plates and the broccoli he took from the oven that was staying warm.

Hannibal took his seat at the kitchen breakfast bar where Will ate all his meals, and let a scruffy, snaggle-toothed white dog smell his hand, and wag up at him. "Who is this one? He looks like a Gargoyle," Hannibal chuckled, able to tell the dog wanted to be picked up.

"She. That's Perscilla, Percy for short," Will said, with a cant to his head, and set a plate out in front of Hannibal and then his own.

“Hello, Percy,” Hannibal said, which set the usually shy white dog wagging again. She laid under Hannibal’s chair when Will set the plates on the table, well trained not to beg for food. “She’s quite well-mannered for a dog. She wanted to jump up on my lap…”

“I’ve been working on her. Buster is the only one that doesn’t really listen,” Will laughed, and took up his seat next to Hannibal.

“Buster is a spirited fellow, much like his master,” Hannibal said, and looked at his plate. “This looks wonderful, very fresh. Did you just catch it today?”

“I haven’t had time,” Will said, shaking his head. He cut into the filet with his fork. “I caught it the other day, just as good, I promise.”

Hannibal took a bite of the fish, and swallowed, then sipped his wine, which complimented the fish very well. “It’s delicious. With any other meat, one tastes the skill of the chef, but with fish, one tastes the skill of the fisherman.”

“I don’t know about that, it’s a lot of luck, too,” Will murmured as he forked rice and broccoli into his mouth and then another bite of fish.

The meal was certainly simple, but very good, and the company was even better. “When did you learn to fish?”

“When I was very young, with my father. He taught me to river fish. I taught myself to fly fish. Little difference,” Will said, looking over at Hannibal through a mop of curls in his eyes.

“I’ve never fished a day in my life, it’s all equally impressive to my ear,” Hannibal said with a smile, and gazed back at Will.

“You don’t look the type that would,” Will agreed. “Takes lot of patience and practice.” He cut into another piece and savored it slowly against his tongue.

Hannibal watched Will savour the piece as he sipped his wine, meeting his eyes over the rim of the glass. “Not the sort to get my hands dirty?” Hannibal asked, with amusement. If only Will knew …

“No, not the type that would go fishing…. On a boat.” Will chuckled, and finished his fish and worked on his veggies and rice.

“I have been on boats, mostly yachts,” Hannibal admitted with an elegant shrug, and took another bite of fish. Hannibal was far from the sort of man who’d never dirtied his hands, no matter how he may look in a suit and tie.

“Of course. Yachts.” Will had never been on one, just fishing boats. He sipped his wine slowly, and sat back in the chair, legs spread a little, their knees touching.

The simple touch made Hannibal smile, and rest his knee against Will’s. “How was your second class of the day? Any proposals from smitten students?” Hannibal teased, gently.

“No. And I never get any,” Will said, pushing around his rice now, decidedly done. “Are you jealous?”

Hannibal licked his lips, slowly, butter and herbs greeting his tongue as he did so. “I would be, yes,” he admitted, and thought of Alana earlier that day as he drank his wine.

“Nothing to be jealous of,” Will said, and pushed away from the counter, and out of his chair, walking his plate to the garbage to scrape his rice off into it.

“You consider yourself the faithful sort?” Hannibal asked gently, as though he already knew the answer. Of course that would not stop his instincts from flaring from time to time, but that could hardly be cured, only controlled.

“Yes. I… like to hold on to what I have when I get it. Not much room for flouncing around when I’m not desirable and don’t want to be,” Will explained, putting his plate in the sink. “There’s more fish, did you want any more?”

Hannibal looked toward the fish, then back at Will. “I would not mind more, thank you. You really don’t understand your appeal? I find that impossible to believe.”

Will laughed bitterly and set another sliver of fish on Hannibal’s plate, coming around the counter again to do so. “Exterior, yes, maybe? On a good day. Interior, well… that’s not the desireable part.”

“Your exterior and your interior are both equally breathtaking,” Hannibal told Will, with one palm over Will’s hip when he came closer to serve the fish. “Why do you imagine pulling myself away from you in the stairwell was a Herculean task?”

“Because you like how I am. Not everyone does,” Will said, swallowing down his nerves at Hannibal’s touch, which flustered him, even now.

“I adore the way you are, every aspect of you,” Hannibal said, sincerely. “I cannot imagine anyone not finding you as irresistible as I do.”

“Eat your fish,” Will said, slipping from Hannibal’s touch, to put the dish back down and put the foil over it to save the rest.

“Yes, dear,” Hannibal murmured, unable to resist the phrase with a little smile. He took a bite of the fish, reminded of fish caught and eaten raw at the side of moonlit streams out of desperate hunger. This was much, much better.

Will flustered a little and started to clean up the meal, putting leftover fish away and the broccoli and put the ride in pot with some stock and let it sit, so he could make the dogs’s food later. “Just glad you like it.”

“I do,” Hannibal assured Will between bites. He had an enormous appetite. If he did not eat enough, especially meat, he’d wake in the middle of the night, too ravenous to sleep, even during a new moon.

“You can have the rest if you want it,” Will said, his smaller frame lean, though well built.

“It’s rude to eat as the host is cleaning up, don’t you think?” Hannibal asked, relying, as he always did, on his flawless manners and determination not to betray his true nature.

“I don’t mind,” Will said with a little shrug. “I don’t get to leftovers often, they usually go to the dogs.”

“Your dogs eat well, in that case,” Hannibal said, and accepted one more piece of fish, beginning to let his guard down around Will. He had a few odd habits, a few dark tastes, he wanted Will too close to him for those to be a secret.

“They still will, trust me,” the brunet said and put the last piece on Hannibal’s plate and then tossed the foil out he used to cover the dish.

“What do you feed them?” Hannibal asked, and watched Will work in the kitchen as he ate, glad Will did not find his appetite at all unusual.

“I make their food. Ground meat, carrots, rice…” Will replied, and started to clean the pots and pans, so he didn't have to do them later.

“They’re quite fortunate to have been adopted by a man who treats them well,” Hannibal said, with a look at Percy under his chair, who just wagged up at him while Buster watched, suspiciously.

“The least I can do to keep their company,” Will laughed, looking good over at Hannibal. The silverware he used was not silver, it was metal, cheap, though now he roughly wished it was to see what might happen…

Hannibal finished his portion, and sipped the wine, finishing his glass before he stood to bring his dishes to Will at the sink. “Thank you, everything was lovely, Will.”

Will finished the pans and then quickly washed Hannibal’s as well. He set everything aside to air dry in a neat little dish sorter, and then turned to Hannibal. “There’s still more wine,” he offered, having finished his own, he needed something stronger.

“So there is, would you like some?” Hannibal asked, hands against Will’s waist.

“You can have it,” Will said, quieter now as Hannibal’s hand warmed him through with just a touch. “I’ll have a finger or two of whiskey.” He nodded to the bottle on top of his fridge.

Hannibal turned to pull the bottle off of the top of the fridge, and opened it to smell the liquor, which burned his nose with unsubtle burning and blunt notes of spice. He found a glass and poured some for Will. “Is this your regular brand?”

“Yes. Easy to find, consistent.” Will took the glass in one hand, the other wound around Hannibal’s trim waist, feeling he had to keep the other man close.

“I’ll have to see if I can find one I’d like to try,” Hannibal said, and kissed Will’s throat.

Will laughed, and stretching his neck for Hannibal, a bruise from earlier that day bloomed over where he had undone his shirt. “You don't want to try that one?”

“I could try,” Hannibal murmured, and kissed the bruise. “I would rather enjoy it as it seeps through your pores.”

Will shivered, reaching around Hannibal for a glass which he set down to fill. “That works too.”

Hannibal filled the glass to one finger, and looked at Will before he took a sip, and made a face. “Hm.”

“So maybe it’s not refined enough for you,” Will said, not one who could not afford to spend a lot of money on finer whiskey or scotch.

“I think perhaps I will taste it from your lips instead,” Hannibal said, with a smile in his eyes.

Will side-eyed Hannibal, but took the glass from him, took a long sip of the golden liquid, and swallowed it.

Hannibal returned to the table to pour a glass of the Italian wine, then sipped it as he watched Will’s throat contract over the swallow, every muscle seductive. “To each his own.”

Will canted his head, trying to figure out what to make of Hannibal actions and words that seemed to contradict each other. “True.”

Hannibal stepped closer, and tipped Will’s head back for a kiss, pressing their lips together. He could taste the whiskey warmed on Will’s lips, heavy on his tongue. It was much, much better this way. Will’s warmth and scent brought out the hidden flavors of the drink, and blended them with his own taste.

Gazing up at Hannibal, Will licked his own lips, mixing the whiskey and wine. “Better?”

“Much better,” Hannibal agreed, softly, and kissed Will again, with one hand buried in Will’s hair, fingers curled in the soft strands that felt like silk after their bath last night.

Humming against Hannibal’s mouth, Will set his glass down on the counter and wrapped his arms around the other man instead, slipping their mouths together seamlessly. It was much less heated than that afternoon, but no less needy and wanting.

The fire that crackled under the meeting of their lips was slow and hot. Hannibal’s other hand slipped down Will’s chest, nails tearing the flannel a little unintentionally as he threw caution to the wind, and forgot to be more careful. The motion was not unfelt, and Will moved in closer, not putting much mind to it as he undid Hannibal’s shirt from his slacks and slipped his hands up his bare back.

Hannibal sucked Will’s tongue, intimately, and pulled Will’s shirt from where it was tucked into his khakis. He ran his hands under the flannel, over Will’s back with a groan as the kiss heated up and he backed Will against the stove, then actually tore the shirt as he yanked it off of Will.

A shirt ruined, yes, but Will found himself incredibly hard at the gesture, his ass warmed by the stove that was off, but still hot. He gasped, pulling Hannibal in closer, as close as they

could possibly be clothed, loathing his tongue around his.

Hannibal cupped Will's ass with both large hands, kneading the flesh through the fabric of his ill-fitting khakis. With another solid, passionate kiss, Hannibal undid Will's belt, quickly, then opened his pants with a tug of one hand, button popping off, zipper torn down. He reached in with one hand and stroked Will through his boxers, moaning.

Back to where they were this afternoon, Will quickly undid Hannibal's shirt, urged by his lust and want, and pushed the shirt off his shoulders, palming down his chest as tongue and teeth clicked and rolled together.

Will's pants fell down his thighs, to his knees, and Hannibal pulled back, out of the kiss breathlessly, then sank to his knees slowly, and pulled Will's boxers down with a deliberate smirk. "You've never so much as kissed a man before?"

The brunet shook his head, curls falling into his face as his head dropped forward to watch Hannibal descend down. "Never."

"Would you mind if I pulled your cock into my mouth, wound my tongue around your shaft, and sucked you until you pulled away, or came?" Hannibal purred, seductively, lips against the hollow of Will's hip. He knew just how powerful his voice could be.

Will rubbed one hand down his face as his jaw slackened slightly at the thought, his cock twitching at Hannibal's words as if answering for him. "N-no… I wouldn't mind…"

"Good, I have been thinking about it all day," Hannibal whispered against Will's sweaty skin as he kissed his way over to Will's cock, and dragged the wet, rough flat of his tongue up Will's cock, then used it to pull him into his mouth, which was much larger than a woman's, much, much hotter. Hannibal's cheeks hollowed as he began to work his tongue around Will, and sucked, slowly, with a moan that rumbled deep in his chest.

Instinctively, Will pushed a hand through Hannibal's hair, clutching just at the back of his head, panting a ragged groan as he pressed his hips forward, sinking his cock further into Hannibal's volcanic mouth. "Oh fu-"

Hannibal moaned as he sank his mouth down deeper around Will's cock, until Will's wet tip ground against the back of his throat. He moaned, and pulled back, slowly, then flicked his tongue against Will's tip, then sucked him down, again.

Will's breathing staggered out unevenly, any sign of the headache he had earlier was gone now, replaced with pure bliss as he gripped Hannibal's hair harder, teeth gritted. "Hannibal…"

Hannibal fed off of the way Will gasped and pulled on his hair, the sound of his straining voice as Hannibal blew him. He cupped Will's ass with both hands, and squeezed, nails digging into his skin as he sucked and moaned, bobbing his warm, skilled mouth around Will, making him spiral into an overload of erotic pleasure as his tongue caressed every nerve.

At this rate, Will was not going to last, he wasn't going to be able to stop when the spiral down into pleasure started. His toes tensed in his boots, and another gasp broke free from his throat, followed by a growl deep from his chest, almost as though mimicking Hannibal's feral sounds and emotions.

Hannibal didn't let up for a moment. The sound of a growl from Will was enough to make him work even harder. His hands clutched Will's hips, nails scratching his flesh as he devoured Will's cock with almost desperate passion and consummate skill.

"I'm-" Will started to say, but the gasps became moans, and his hips pushed in with the rough sliding of Hannibal's tongue around the tip, and his jaw slackened as he started to teeter over the edge, and dropped right over, coming undone in waves.

Hannibal knew Will was about to come, able to taste and smell it as Will lost control. He moaned and scratched Will's ass, then pulled him in all the way and held him there as Will climaxed, spilling down Hannibal's throat. Hannibal swallowed, twice, and pulled his mouth off, slowly, lips wet and swollen with friction.

Eyes closed tightly, Will was sweating a little from that alone, a drop dripping down his his neck to his bare shoulders. He clutched his hands into Hannibal's broad shoulders. It was better than any blow job he'd ever gotten, not that he'd had many.

Hannibal stood slowly, and picked Will up in his arms, with ease, then carried him to the bed. He laid Will in his own bed, and climbed over him, with a kiss to his lips, sharing the taste. "Your legs were trembling…"

"You've swept me off my feet," Will said, trying not to sound too swoony, a bitterness to his tone, but his movements stayed with Hannibal as he kicked off his boots and pants, no use having either of those on anymore.

Hannibal smiled, and helped Will off with his boots, socks, and pants, then laid with him again once those were off, and kissed his lips. "You taste much better than whiskey…"

"Good to know," Will chuckled lightly, and slipped his hands down to free Hannibal of his pants as well. "Only fair."

"It would be rude of me to refuse," Hannibal whispered, and arched his ass off the blankets to let Will strip him completely. The inside of his mouth still tasted like Will, he hoped the flavor would never fade, nor would the sound of Will coming fade from his ears.

Will gazed up at Hannibal and ran hands down his stubbly face, and then kissed him again, tasting himself on the doctor's tongue for a long moment, before pulling back. "Alana said she thought we'd get along… guess she was right."

"Did she? You saw her today?" Hannibal asked, with their faces close, then turned his head to kiss Will's palm, still looking into his eyes.

"She came to see me after class, right before I ran into you," Will explained, watching Hannibal. "I might have disappointed her…"

“How so?” Hannibal asked, unable to keep his eyes from shining, proudly. He ducked his head, and kissed the underside of Will’s jaw, then trailed his warm lips to Will’s ear to suck at his earlobe, slowly.

“She seemed to want more from me, and I didn't budge. She seemed reasonable, but upset,” Will said, lifting his chin and then moved his head to the side with a sigh. “You have taken over my thoughts…”

Hannibal remembered. He remembered the way his heart twisted in his chest at the sight of Alana telling Will she thought they might date someday, tacitly presenting Will with a choice … a choice Will had already made before she had walked in the room. He looked up at Will, nose to nose with him, eyes shining. “You have begun to inhabit every room of my memory palace. You are welcome behind every door, Will, I long for you when you are away, even an hour,” Hannibal confessed with a kiss.

Will was hopelessly addicted, bound to Hannibal in ways he was still trying to understand. He reached up and wrapped arms around Hannibal’s shoulders, hugging him as they kissed slowly. “Memory palace?”

“It’s a mnemonic device, a constructed palace in my mind in which I store my memories. I may walk into the room of a memory at any time and observe every detail,” Hannibal said with a soft smile in his eyes and brushed Will’s curls off of his forehead.

“What sort of rooms are in it?” Will asked, curiously gazing up at the other man.

“My memories of medical school are housed within the anatomy lab where I spent long hours learning the intricacies of the human body. On the walls are papers I’ve written, long shelves of books I’ve enjoyed learning from … I can read them again in their entirety at any time. They are preserved, forever, in that room.”

“You have good memories of those times then,” Will said with a smile, leaning up to kiss Hannibal’s scruffy jaw.

“I do,” Hannibal agreed, and closed his eyes for the sweet kiss, then looked at Will. “My meeting you has it’s own room, but you wander from chamber to chamber in the palace, even when you are away.

“We just met,” Will whispered, kissing to Hannibal’s lips, looking at him up close. “What room do I occupy? Jack’s office?”

“Strangely enough, you occupy this house, and a stream that has begun to circle the entire palace,” Hannibal said, with a nudge against Will’s face, gently, snuggling their profiles together.

That bit of information was interesting and yet completely what Will expected to hear. He filed that information away for later. “One might think you liked it here.”

“I enjoy the quiet, and the fresh air, not to mention being able to see you in your natural setting,” Hannibal chuckled, still nuzzling Will adoringly. It was difficult not to tell Will the

entire truth, but much was at stake, it was still too soon.

Will smiled and wrapped his long runners legs around Hannibal's hips, rolling them over. He straddled the doctor, his guard down, his forts and walls completely torn and ripped apart by wolf's teeth, even if he had no idea of the impact just yet, nor the truth. Will looked happy and much younger than he had in years. "The quiet is nice. You might grow to like that too."

"Are you planning to keep me out here, Will? To make me wild and peel back my person suit to see what lies beneath?" Hannibal asked, fondly, with one palm against Will's cheek.

Wills sea blue eyes watched Hannibal as he spoke, each word spoke volumes to the profiler. "Do you feel you need to shed your skin to be your true self?"

Hannibal brushed his hand down Will's chest, almost sadly, able to feel the restraints of what he should be chafing what waited beneath. "Transformation is a powerful force."

Logically, Will knew that what he was starting to suspect couldn't be true, and yet he felt he was staring right at the very thing he shouldn't believe in. "It is…"

"We are both capable of transformation from what is a convenient facade into what is true. Neither of our truths are acceptable to others. The highest form of love is to be oneself, and to be cherished for the act," Hannibal reasoned.

"Are you not yourself with me?" Will was never anything but himself, but it was *easy* to get lost mimicking others and acting how they needed him to be.

"I am myself with you, as much as I can be," Hannibal said, after a moment's silence, and kissed Will softly as he caressed his face with one hand.

So there were walls, things that would not be discussed. Will nodded his understanding, swallowing. " Right. Of course. We all have pieces we don't show."

"Do you imagine there is anything I could show you that would sever our bond?" Hannibal asked, softly, and swallowed as he watched Will's expression.

They had just met, though they certainly had grown together quickly, Will had never been more sure of a relationship until now. "I can't answer that without knowing what it was…"

"Of course not," Hannibal sighed, and licked his lips. "A passing thought, nothing more."

And just like that, Will was sure their barriers had been erected once more. The sound of pawing at the screen door broke Will from thought and he crawled off the doctor to let the pack in.

Hannibal sighed, and sat up to watch Will as he let the dogs in. They swarmed around him and rushed to the bed to sniff at their discarded clothes, fascinated by the smells. "You need a revolving door for them all."

Will laughed, no issue in his nudity around Hannibal, and offered a weak smile over at him. "I don't want raccoons getting into the house."

“You would no doubt adopt them, anyhow,” Hannibal said, extending a hand toward Will, beckoning him back to bed.

Will shut the door and locked it, the dogs sprawling out over the floor. The brunet shuffled back to the bed, and dropped down next to Hannibal. “Adopt a raccoon?”

Hannibal pulled Will closer by his waist, and covered them with Will’s worn blankets as he let Will lay against his hairy chest. “Just another pack member,” he teased.

“A raccoon would eat all their food,” Will insisted, and curled up against Hannibal, resting his arm over his chest while he listened to the beating of his heart.

“If your wolf returns, perhaps you may keep him,” Hannibal whispered, as he covered Will up to his shoulders with the blankets as the evening chill settled into the old house. The house had solid structure and classic lines, with some updating it could be quite liveable.

“Buster wouldn’t stand for that,” Will said, not tired, the night was young, but he hadn’t slept much recently, and it was warm up against Hannibal like this.

Hannibal laughed. “What if Buster does not approve of me? Will you have to say you cannot see me anymore?” he asked Will, and took a deep breath of the scent of Will’s wild curls.

“He’s not barked at you for an hour,” Will pointed out, warmed through, even if he was starting to feel too warm, he still stayed close.

“A miracle, to be certain,” Hannibal murmured, the content feeling seeping through his body when he and Will laid together like this, curled into one another, as secure as though they were in a den on a stormy night. “Perhaps he’ll accept food from me without biting, later.”

“He doesn’t bite, he nips,” Will insisted, tangling their feet together, nothing like laying with a woman, who was always smaller. Will found he liked this much, much better, even if they still had a few secrets between them.

“His bark is literally worse than his bite?” Hannibal asked, with an amused tone. “I cannot say the same for myself…”

Will’s gaze moved over Hannibal’s form to his neck, watching him up close even if their eyes did not meet. There was so much unsaid, and if Hannibal would need Will to protect him, in any form, Will had to know, he could never assume. “His bite is vicious, but he’s still a very small dog.”

“Then he has my respect. Confronting a creature far larger and more deadly than oneself requires courage most men simply do not possess,” Hannibal said, with a far off look in his eyes, like he knew that from experience.

“That he does have. If not stupidity,” Will chuckled lightly, toyed his fingers through Hannibal’s chest hair, and nosed against his jaw as he pressed his lips against his pulse.

“Hmm,” Hannibal sighed with a smile as he tipped his head back. His neck was already covered in scruff again, the previously smooth skin roughened by the short, wiry, silver and

amber hair under Will's lips.

There wasn't much to do in Will's house to keep them entertained, but Will didn't mind, he liked the chat they were having, just being there with one another, intimate in ways he couldn't be with anyone else, and had never wanted to be either. He pressed another kiss to Hannibal's jaw, and then his mouth again, leaning over him.

Hannibal groaned, softly, and stretched out, his arms going up hands flexing a little in pleasure. "Will…" he sighed, and wrapped one long, hairy leg around Will's thigh.

Will pet down Hannibal's hairy chest, fingers trailing down to his belly, and then the thatch of hair at this groin, scratching blunt nails against his skin there as he bit Hannibal's bottom lip gently, just at first.

"There-" Hannibal gasped, cock growing hard again at Will's touch. Hannibal pressed his lips up, into a kiss as he rocked his hips and stretched his hands to curl around the bars of Will's headboard.

The brunet watched Hannibal eagerly, palming his cock as it grew, filling with blood. He licked his lips, nervously, feeling Hannibal out as he bit a little harder, and worked him over against calloused skin.

Hannibal arched his hips. The light from a lamp near Hannibal's clenched hand shone into his eyes, lighting them up bright amber above the scruff on his jaw. "Perfect hands, just rough enough…" he whispered, encouraging Will, absolutely fixated.

And encourage Will it did, who started to work Hannibal over faster, squeezing at the top, and forcing his palm back down over Hannibal, creating just enough friction. Will leaned in and bit Hannibal's pulse this time, hard enough to bruise as he laved his tongue there.

Hannibal's eyes fluttered shut again, and he arched his back, which made his lean body flex under Will before he rutted his hips against Will's hand, breathing hard. "Harder-" he whispered.

They rustled under the blankets, until Will kicked them off, onto the floor with the dogs, and straddled Hannibal again, jerking his cock in his hand, between his own legs as he bit harder, this time the faint taste of copper hitting his tongue. He groaned against Hannibal's skin, working him faster.

Hannibal gritted his teeth, writhing under Will's touch, and spread his thighs wider for Will, shaking with lust. "Perfect, press us together, Will, stroke us both with your hand…"

Will crawled between Hannibal's legs and rutted up against him, and took them both in hand, pistoning his hips so their cocks slid together, gliding precome between their taut skin. "Hannibal-" he huffed.

"There," he gasped, and curled one leg around Will's hips, then the other, flushed and breathless. "Harder, Will, harder-"

Will slowed and just used his hand to pump them both hard and fast, feeling himself reach that level of pleasure he knew he wouldn't come down from unless he toppled right over, but he wasn't going without Hannibal, not this time.

Hannibal reached up, and gripped Will's hair with one hand as he moaned and looked down at the sight of their cocks together, rosy and hard, seeping as Will's hand thrummed over them feverishly. "Don't stop," Hannibal gasped, eyes going brighter, "close…"

The brunet matched Hannibal's moans as he bucked forward to intensify pleasure, gasping as he started to come, for a second time, spilling pearly white over Hannibal's erection and down, over his belly. "Hannibal-"

Hannibal growled, low in his chest, then gasped. Broken foreign words escaped from his lips as he and Will came together, and they spilled, mingling between Will's sticky fingers. Hannibal finally opened his eyes again, his body in such a state of utter bliss that he felt like he was soaring inside. The hand clenched around the iron bedpost relaxed, and brushed against the old lamp next to Will's bed.

After the odd hissing sound of flesh against something hot enough to burn it, Hannibal swore in the same language, and yanked his hand from the lamp. The skin on his fingers was bubbling and blackened from touching the metal base of it.

Blissful moment gone, Will reacted quickly, and got cool wet towel from the kitchen, and brought it over. "Did you touch the bulb? That one gets hot…" Will knew, though, looking over, that Hannibal had not touched the bulb, but the base, a strange and tarnished color, but Hannibal was gone.

Hannibal was already in the bathroom, where Will followed, and held his hand under a stream of cold water in the sink, chest heaving, face calm. He swallowed, and looked back at Will as his skin slowly stopped bubbling, and turned a shiny grey color where he'd touched the lamp. "An electrical short, perhaps," he sighed, but the look in his eyes as he looked at Will was hardly convincing.

"That should be worse looking than it is then," Will said, watching the burn already start to heal over a little bit, faster than any human should.

Hannibal covered the burn with the cold cloth, and looked Will in the eye. "I have an allergy," he explained, calmly, but he was breathing more quickly than usual.

Will nodded slowly. "I can get you a benedryl…" he offered quietly, not pushing, though he honestly could, Will was being careful here, well aware of everything that could go wrong, and likely would.

"Thank you, yes, that would be helpful," Hannibal nodded, and licked his lips as he noticed a harsh, metallic taste in his mouth, and fatigue beginning to wash over him.

"Go lie down," Will said, not demanding, just a comment, and then was off to rummage through his cabinets to find the allergy medication he kept on hand, just in case.

Hannibal watched Will, hand still wrapped tightly with the cloth, and leaned in to kiss the side of Will's jaw. "Thank you, Will," he whispered, almost against Will's ear, and headed back to bed to find Buster in his spot.

"He does that," Will said, finding the tiny pink pills, and then brought over a fresh glass of water for Hannibal, and popped one of the pills out.

"Thank you," Hannibal said, and held out his good hand to Will to take the pill, then the glass of water. The worst part about the allergy was how ill it made him afterward, and that the antihistamine would do anything but improve his condition … however, appearances had to be maintained. Hannibal took the pills with the water, and set the glass aside, on the nightstand, very cautious not to touch the lamp. "How long have you had that lamp? I hadn't noticed it was an antique…"

"It came with the house," Will said, moving the lamp out of the way, away from Hannibal's reach. "Most of what is here did. The bed is mine. The fishing gear, mine…"

"You purchased all of this with the house and have not changed it since?" Hannibal asked, so astounded that he ignored all of the pain in his arm. "Wouldn't you rather have surroundings that you've selected for yourself?"

"I don't like looking for furniture," Will said, with a shrug. "Just things that I need. I had what I needed, the rest I didn't have to worry about." On the sill by the window were little dog figurines though, clearly those were his.

Beginning to feel dizzy, Hannibal pulled Will closer with his good hand, and wrapped his arm around Will's waist. "Have you ever purchased new furniture? Do you simply wait for a sofa to fall apart beneath you before you will seek a new one?" Hannibal had never met anyone as pragmatic as Will, in this way. It was strangely charming if his entire house didn't have an air of a neglected elderly person's residence.

"I don't see the use in wasting money on things I don't need if I have them and they work fine," Will said, slightly offended by that notion.

"You don't believe that the way you dress your home could affect your state of mind, your mood, and how you perceive yourself?" Hannibal asked, focusing on Will and not the ache that now shot up to his neck from his damaged hand.

"I don't really spend too much time in the house," Will explained, looking down at Hannibal, blinking. He'd never thought about it, but he'd never been one for interior design either.

"To you, a house is simply a place to sleep, a place to take refuge from the elements and store one's necessary items?" Hannibal guessed. He kept his injured hand against Will's chest, and stroked the other over Will's back. "It can be art, as well. A house can be a source of comfort, of personal expression, a solace of individuality in an oppressive world."

"To someone who never had a real home, that's hardly what it is," Will said, leaning to kiss Hannibal's brow. "You should rest."

“Are you fussing over me, Special Agent Graham?” Hannibal asked with a soft twinkle in his eyes at the treatment. When Will had snapped at him in Jack’s office, he hardly seemed like the type to take care of an ailing lover.

“I can *not* fuss if you want, but I don’t want to be held accountable for you dying in my house over a lamp,” Will said, retreating a little, mentally.

Hannibal chuckled, and leaned up to give Will’s lips a soft kiss. His own lips were chilled as his body endured the reaction of exposure to a toxin. “I do not mind the fussing at all, not from you,” Hannibal said, fondly.

Will reached over to turn the light off, and then wrapped them both in blankets. He was personally running too hot, where Hannibal was cold. “Go to sleep.” It was early, but Will was fatigued.

Will’s pillows were thin, beaten down to pancakes over time, and never updated, but Hannibal had to admit, he’d rather be here with Will than at home without him. Hannibal was exhausted, drained and cold as he curled around Will’s warmth under the covers. “Such a romantic, Will,” he teased softly.

Shushing him, Will turned to let Hannibal spoon him, far different than anyone else he’d ever done this with. “You knew what you were getting into.”

“So I did,” Hannibal said, and kept that reasoning in mind to remind Will of later, when Will’s pillows were upgraded … and possibly the mattress. “Perhaps you’ll sleep well tonight, I seem to be able to lull you into a peaceful slumber.”

“Think you’re special after one night?” Will murmured, his eyes drooping closed as a sweat started to break out over the back of his neck.

Hannibal sighed against the back of Will’s neck, and then smelled his skin, and paused, mid-thought as a new avalanche of ideas sprung to life in Hannibal’s complex mind. “Have you been suffering headaches, recently?”

“I’m having one right now,” Will muttered, as he turned his head slightly, side eyeing his bed partner.

Hannibal scoffed, and moved his good palm to touch Will’s forehead. “You’re very warm, have you been feverish often?”

“Sometimes, crime scenes. Usually when I don’t sleep.” Will let out a sigh, and turned a little more to look at Hannibal. “I’m fine. You’re the one suffering.”

“I’m also a medical doctor,” Hannibal reminded Will, as he looked at Will’s eyes, and took another deep, slow breath of his hot skin. He could smell it … just there, near Will’s ear. It smelled almost like caramelizing sugar in a pan so hot that the copper was about to fuse to the stove.

Will sighed, long and heavy, and wrapped himself around Hannibal as he did that, and laid over him. “Stop smelling me and go to sleep.”

Hannibal sighed, and wrapped his arm around Will’s bare, smooth, hot back again. He was struggling to stay awake, his body longed for sleep so that it could repair the damage to his hand, and he closed his eyes. “Very well, good night, Will,” he whispered, into Will’s curls.

Will nuzzled in, letting Hannibal hold him like this for now. He drifted off to sleep, kicking the covers off of them at some point in the night.

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Sometime around three in the morning, a light came from upstairs, and Will was nowhere to be seen on the bottom floor. The dogs were sleeping, but Buster was upstairs wagging at the light from the bathroom up there that was never used.

Hannibal’s eyes opened, and finding Will gone, he sat up. The light on upstairs was mysterious. Hannibal climbed out of their mussed bed, and wound the sheet around his hips as he walked toward the stairs. His hand was still painful, but healing now, and he was far more curious than exhausted. “Will?”

Will was hushing Buster, but not looking at him. He was naked still, covered in a slick sheen of warm sweat, cooled on his skin now, flushed with his hair matted down to his face, but his eyes were opened, unfocused. “Shh….” he said, his head turning toward Hannibal’s voice. “You’ll scare him away.”

Hannibal sighed, and approached Will in his dissociated state. The burnt, sweet smell from Will was nearly overpowering now, filling the room and cloying to Hannibal’s sensitive nose. “Scare whom away, Will?” Hannibal whispered, and wet a facecloth in the sink, then used it to blot Will’s face, very gently.

“The….” Will unfocused eyes started to refocus on Hannibal, his body slackening, his hand on the counter top to ground himself, the cool cloth bringing him right back to present, but not without confusion. “You should be in bed…” he whispered.

“You’ve been sleepwalking,” Hannibal whispered back, and blotted sweat from out of Will’s eyebrows, saving his eyes from the sting of it. “Not to mention, you are drenched in sweat. Do you recall what you were dreaming about?” Hannibal asked as he reached down to start the tub next to them with his injured hand, good hand there to keep Will steady.

“Oh,” Will sighed, and stopped Hannibal. “I’m okay. I… this happens. The case is getting to me. Dreaming about the wolf again.”

“Your wolf, or the killer wolf? What was he doing?” Hannibal asked while the tub filled with water, and Buster smelled Will’s ankles, but stopped barking at him now that he was awake.

“Coming… to me…” Will couldn’t focus and tried to slip away from Hannibal, but only ended up weak kneed, and leaned against him. “Sorry, you’re sick and I’ve picked a hell of a night to be nuts…”

“I think it is very possible you are battling your own sickness,” Hannibal said softly, and wrapped his arms around Will’s back, able to estimate Will’s temperature by touch alone at well over a hundred degrees. “We must cool you down, Will.”

“I’m not sick,” Will protested, looking at the bath and then Hannibal, the worry in his eyes. “You really think you can… touch and smell illness on me?” His brows furrowed in, and he took a step back.

“You’re very febrile, Will,” Hannibal reasoned, and shut off the water in the tub. “Yes, I could smell something … one might call it a fevered sweetness.”

“I feel fine,” Will said, but he was burning up at this point, and looked down at the water, and kneeled to put his hand in, it wasn’t cold, but much cooler than himself.

“We need to reduce your body temperature,” Hannibal said, and opened the medicine cabinet to find it empty. “The bath will feel like a tremendous relief,” he assured Will, and turned to gesture to the tub, for Will to climb in.

The brunet stared down into the water, and then at Hannibal. “I'm not sick.” He got in, slowly, swallowing down a lump, and then curled his arms around his knees.

“You are prone to terrible headaches and night sweats, I would beg to differ,” Hannibal said, and unwrapped his burnt hand, which looked a little better now, but still discolored and blistered. He used both hands to smooth water over Will’s neck and face, into his hair, cooling him down.

“I get night terrors. Always have. Headaches come from too much interaction,” Will muttered answer grabbed Hannibal’s hand to look at it. “I should be making sure you're fine.”

Hannibal sighed, still exhausted, and dizzy with a lingering metallic taste in his mouth. “Allow me to bring some acetaminophen, and I’ll rest with you in the tub.”

“I'll get out,” Will said, looking up at Hannibal. “We'll go back to bed.”

“I think you should soak here for a while,” Hannibal insisted. Will was, of course, as stubborn as Buster. Hannibal worked more cool water into Will’s hair. “Your core temperature is likely still elevated far beyond normal. Do you own a thermometer?”

“I don't know.” Will had never been sick enough to need one, not living on his own. He didn't move, but did shiver slightly, knees pulled to his chest tighter.

Will was suffering, and Hannibal had a very good idea of what was ailing him. Of course, it could be … useful… But he was bonded to Will, too attached to consider exploiting Will’s predicament. Being away from him for a matter of a few hours was painful, being away from Will for longer would be agony. “Perhaps tomorrow we will see about consulting a colleague of mine.”

Shaking his head, Will’s limbs quaked as he shivered a little, but clearly still sweated. “I… have to meet with Jack at noon. I can’t do that.”

“I’ll make arrangements to go after hours. Dr. Sutcliffe is a friend of mine, I’m certain he’ll oblige,” Hannibal said, still working water through Will’s sweaty hair. The water was not cold at all, merely lukewarm, but it felt like ice water to Will’s hot skin. “For how long have you been having these headaches?”

“Long enough to assume it was normal, considering what I do,” Will murmured quietly, resting his head against his arms.

Hannibal sighed, and wet the back of Will’s neck for him with his good hand. “I think this warrants investigation, Will. Have you been seeing things?”

“Seeing things? Hallucinations you mean?” Will quirked a bow up at Hannibal, flushed. “I don't know… maybe. It's hard to tell the difference between the waking world and the dream one sometimes.”

“I’d like you to have an MRI scan,” Hannibal murmured, and felt Will’s skin with his injured hand. It was cooler now, thankfully. Hannibal wanted to lean his spinning head against the tub and sleep, more than anything, but he had to be certain Will’s overheating brain was cooled down, at least for the night.

Will considered as he watched Hannibal, his own vision shifting in and out, turning Hannibal into the wolf, then a dark shadowy creature, and back again. “Only if you go lay down.”

Hannibal’s hair was loose from sleep, shaggy and long enough to skim his cheekbones when he leaned over Will to kiss his forehead, softly. “You will come lay down with me,” Hannibal murmured. “I think you’ll be cool enough if we have your bedside fan on, and give you some acetaminophen. We both need rest.”

Will nodded and slowly got up, undoing the plug, and then grabbed a towel to dry off. “I'll go find a fan.”

Hannibal wrapped a towel around Will’s hips for him, and blotted his hair a little, but left it wet, then looked at himself in the mirror. He had dark circles under his amber eyes, and looked paler than usual. “Where do you keep your Tylenol, Will?” Hannibal asked, as they walked back down the stairs together, slowly.

“Kitchen cabinet over the stove,” Will said, both of them keeping the other up and from falling over as they descended the stairs into the dog filled living room.

Hannibal nodded, and brushed his hand against Will’s back before he headed into the kitchen, and returned with a jug of water in his good hand, and a glass holding the tylenol in the damaged hand. He set the jug down, and opened the tylenol bottle to shake two pills out for Will before he filled the water glass for Will and waited, sitting on the edge of the bed.

Percy put her paws on the edge then jumped up to smell Hannibal’s chest, and laid in his lap.

Will took the pills and drank the water down. He shooed Percy off Hannibal and then laid his towel down where he would lay in the bed, so he didn't sweat through the sheets.

“Where do you keep your fan, Will? You’ll need it to remain cool, or I fear you will just overheat again as we sleep,” Hannibal asked. It might have been the fatigue, but he really did not mind the little gargoyle-faced white dog lying in his lap. She was concerned, able to smell the way Hannibal’s body reacted to the allergen through his skin.

“I’ll get it.” Will said, trudging to a closet close by and then pulled it out and set it where the lamp had been, and plugged it in, toward them on the bed, and then crawled back in.

Hannibal wrapped his arm around Will from behind, so that the wind from the fan blew on Will first, and settled against him. “Good night, Will,” he whispered, and fell asleep the second he closed his eyes, as heavily as though a dark hand had dragged him into a black and dreamless slumber.

Chapter 5

Chapter by beforethedawn, Destinyawakened

Will's sleep was not dreamless, if his thrashing about had anything to tell for it, but for the most part, he stayed asleep and finally settled at eight that morning as the shone through, and he covered his eyes with one arm, having forgotten to set an alarm to be sure he woke in time for his meeting with Jack. The hours pressed one, and the brunet kept sleeping, as though finally able to catch up on what he'd been missing out on.

At two pm, a heavy hand knocked sharply enough on Will's front door that Buster jumped and barked at the intrusive noise. Hannibal opened his eyes for the first time since he'd fallen asleep, and looked over to see afternoon sunlight pouring in through the windows, and Jack Crawford's shape looming against the window. "Will…" Hannibal said, shaking Will gently.

The brunet grunted and turned, paler looking now, and sweaty, hair stuck to his face and back of his neck. He opened his eyes, stunningly blue, and looked at Hannibal and then realized Buster was barking, at the door. Will slowly got to his feet and pulled on a pair of pajama pants and a t-shirt and went to open the door.

The dogs rushed around Jack to go out to do their business, and Jack stared at Will's state, gruffly concerned. "We've been waiting at the Museum for you for two hours. You didn't answer your phone. I called five times. What the hell happened?"

"Uhm…" Will tried to work his tongue over words, but his mouth felt too dry and his mind jumbled. "I, uhm… I got sick...Slept too much. I thought I set an alarm…"

Jack checked his watch, and gave Will a skeptical look. "You slept until after two in the afternoon, Will. I have cadets that don't sleep in that long. Are you hungover? Is that what's going on here?"

Hannibal stepped in behind Will, with a hand on Will's shoulder. The elegant man was dressed, incongruously, in Will's ratty, worn housecoat that was far, far too small on his broad shouldered frame. "He's not hungover, Jack. He is very ill, I can attest to that," Hannibal said, evenly.

Jack faltered for a moment, and looked between them. "Just what the hell is going on here!?"

"You wanted us to get closer. You wanted to be sure Hannibal was right here, at my side if I needed him," Will said, leaning against the door frame, his vision swimming again, and Jack's face swirled.

"I spent the night here, to take care of Will. I didn't bring any pajamas, Jack, it was an emergency. You'll have to excuse our attire," Hannibal said, calmly, and Jack seemed to unclench, then nodded at Will.

“I was running a temperature and seeing things, so Hannibal came by,” Will stated, agreeing with Hannibal’s statement. It seemed anything more than a doctor-patient relationship might not be welcomed.

“What is he sick with?” Jack asked, and stepped inside as Hannibal guided Will back to the bed, and sat him down, then gave him another glass of water and more tylenol.

“Quite possibly encephalitis. Will has been suffering from night sweats and severe headaches that he has been neglecting to report to a doctor, until last night. His temperature was dangerously high, he was staggering and seeing things that were not there. I suspect auto-immune encephalitis, but that requires an MRI for definitive diagnosis, which I knew we were unlikely to get in the middle of the night. I finally lowered Will’s body temperature to a safe temperature, and stayed with him to ensure he remained hydrated and did not wander off in a delusional state, as he nearly did last night. We’ve only just woken now. Will settled after dawn, and slept deeply, as did I, it’s been quite the ordeal. I’m very sorry I did not think of calling, Jack, I was certain I would wake well before your appointment with Will, I’m afraid it slipped my mind.”

Jack nodded, and looked at Will with worry instead of anger. “We’ll figure something out, don’t worry. Should we get him to a hospital?” Jack asked, speaking as though Will was not there, while he looked at him.

“I have a colleague who may be able to help us, if you’ll excuse me, I’m about to make the call to his office. May I offer you a cup of coffee?” Hannibal asked Jack, and then Will, with a raise of his eyebrows.

Will pushed the door open for Jack and let him in and just trudged past Hannibal to gather clothing, and then locked himself into the bathroom to change, Buster pawing at the door.

Five minutes later, the smell of coffee wafted into the bathroom, and the front door closed behind Jack as he left. Hannibal began to cook in the kitchen after finding what he needed to improve something simple for breakfast, and coaxed Buster from the bathroom door with a little bacon.

“He actually left?” Will asked as he stepped out, jeans and flannel shirt on, the first few buttons undone, an undershirt underneath.

“He left. I managed to arrange for us to see Dr. Sutcliffe tonight at seven for a scan. Thankfully, he was able to manage to book you for an after hours appointment.” Hannibal handed Will a cup of coffee with a little smile. “How are you feeling?”

“I’m fine,” Will insisted, and took the cup of coffee and sat down at the breakfast bar, holding it between two hands. The fever was gone for now, but the hallucinations were not, and Will found he had to focus harder in order to see things clearly. Or, as clearly as he could imagine they were.

“You look as though you’re struggling,” Hannibal noted as he cooked, and flipped an omelette over in the pan, then looked back at Will. “Are you having another hallucination?”

“I don't know what is real or made up. I'm starting to question if I've even seen reality the last few days.. weeks even.” The wolf could have very well have been a hallucination, and Will a simply projected his hallucination onto the case. He rubbed a hand over his eyes.

“What is it that you doubt seeing? The wolf?” Hannibal asked, and began to plate the food onto Will’s very plain, inexpensive plates, managing to make it look beautiful nonetheless.

“Everything. I didn’t know it before,but now that you’ve pointed it out, I don’t know what is real anymore,” Will whispered into his mug.

Hannibal set their plates down, and reached over to touch Will’s face. “I assure you, Will, I am real.”

“You are. Not my wolf…” Will sighed heavily, blinking as he leaned his face into Hannibal’s hand. “And likely not the way I saw the killer either. It probably is that kid I’ve sent Jack after.”

“Then we are still on the right path,” Hannibal said, reassuringly as he fixed his stunning eyes on Will. The shadows had lessened under them this morning, and Hannibal looked better, but a little wilder, if anything. “If your wolf was real, I have no doubt you will see him again, soon.”

There was a little light that had left Will’s eyes on realizing he was hallucinating a lot of things, especially his wolf. Honestly, what wolf would let a human pet it? Will felt stupid for it, and even more stupid to assume Hannibal might be a werewolf, of all things. “How’s your hand?”

Hannibal showed Will his hand, which looked now, like a normal second degree burn, bubbled and pink. “Rather sore, but I think it will heal well,” he said, and nudged Will with his good hand to remind him there was food to eat. “You need some nutrients in your body, Will, you had a very eventful evening, and haven’t eaten since dinner.”

Well into the afternoon, he should have been hungry, but Will felt nauseated as he looked the eggs over with a swallow. He picked up his fork and cut into omelette made for him, and forced a bite into his mouth. “Thanks.”

“Hopefully we can shed some light on what’s causing your troubling symptoms. Do you often wake out of bed?” Hannibal asked, as they ate, and rose to make Will some tea instead of coffee, which would be easier on his stomach.

“Water is fine,” Will insisted, and then ate another bite, just to show he was fine. “I do. But I’ve done that all my life.”

“Have you ever woken outdoors?” Hannibal asked, and poured Will a glass of water from the jug that he put in the fridge. In the water floated an artfully sliced lemon.

“Yes, on the roof once, usually the dogs get to me before that happens,” Will explained, looking down at the lemon in the water but drank it anyway.

Hannibal watched Will eye the lemon in his glass, and smiled a little as he drank it anyway. Will's house was clean enough, but certainly could use a little smoothing down of rough edges. "Usually? That's incredibly dangerous, you could die from a fall like that if you fell against a rock."

"It doesn't happen a lot, the going outside. Depends on cases too, if I sleepwalk at all," Will explained and finished his water and cut more egg, forcing down another bite.

"Perhaps you should have someone stay with you until you find a way to resolve your somnambulistic tendencies," Hannibal suggested, slyly, and ate a piece of fluffy omelette while he watched Will.

"If you have your way, I'll likely be in the hospital for a few weeks anyway," Will sneered slightly, not unaware how serious the illness was Hannibal thought he had.

"If encephalitis is what you have, a few weeks in the hospital is far preferable to complications of the condition, including death from cardiovascular failure,. I doubt very much you would want to leave your pack behind suddenly," Hannibal said, knowledgeably.

Will swallowed and pushed the rest of his breakfast to the side. Neither situation was a good one. "And who will look after them while I'm recovering?"

"I will, if you'd trust me with their care," Hannibal volunteered. He could imagine Will refusing to be hospitalized to care for his dogs, he was one of the most obstinate people Hannibal had ever met.

"Let's just see what your friend says," Will murmured, realizing they were eating *breakfast* at almost three in the afternoon.

"Very well, if it is autoimmune encephalitis, you may rest assured, it is curable, and nearly never re-occurs. It's much better than a host of other diagnoses," Hannibal said, and cleared Will's plate. He let Percy have a little egg from his fingers, then the other dogs if they sat first. Buster was the only one who refused to sit, or eat from Hannibal's hand.

Will watched, worried that if he did get put into the hospital, that Buster might just suffer for it. He frowned, sipping his coffee now that he had food on his belly. "I guess so. Nothing would be nice too though."

"With your symptoms, finding nothing neurologically wrong with you in the scan would only leave mental illness as a diagnoses," Hannibal reasoned, softly, and sipped his own coffee, still wearing Will's ratty robe.

"I'm not crazy," Will said, though even he had a hard time believing that. "Do you need a change of clothes before we go?"

"Do you mean you do not think I should go in your nearly disintegrated house robe?" Hannibal asked, with a little smile, looking down at the hair on his chest.

"It's not very distinguished of you," Will pointed out, and got up, slowly, to do the dishes.

“You prefer me distinguished?” Hannibal asked and untied the robe, then slipped it off as he walked into the living room with unhurried grace, and folded the robe neatly to lay it on Will’s bed.

Will bit his lip as he watched Hannibal, and trailed after him slowly, and wrapped his arms around his naked form from behind, kissing his shoulder with hot lips. “I know you prefer to be.”

Hannibal smiled at the kiss, and looked back over his shoulder as he shook out his dress shirt, and laid it on the bed. “I do. Where is your iron?”

“Iron?” Will made a face, shrugging. He’d never needed to use one before, though he was sure he had one. “Bathroom maybe?”

“Maybe?” Hannibal asked after he pulled on his briefs, and turned to look at Will, amused.

“I haven’t used one in a while. I buy most of my stuff so that it comes out of the dryer and hang it and its wrinkle proof,” Will explained, pulling back to find his boots as he wiped his face with the back of his hand.

Hannibal arched an eyebrow at Will, and shook his head, then went into the bathroom to try to locate an iron. A moment later, he came out with one that was covered in dust, and still in the original box. “A housewarming gift?”

“Don’t have many friends. Probably sent by my dad when I was still in college,” Will chuckled, tying up his boots and then found a jacket. Nothing he wore really matched.

Hannibal unpacked the iron and then plugged it into a wall in the kitchen, and looked at Will through the doorway, still only in his briefs. “Dare I ask if you have an ironing board?”

“Do you dare?” Will shook his head. “I'll go check in the shed.”

“Thank you,” Hannibal said, and pulled on his trousers, slowly, then began to brush dog hair off of them with his hands before doing the same to his suit jacket.

Will wandered out, staggering a little as head started to pound, and he heard howls in the distance, like a wolf was caught, hurt somewhere. Forgetting himself for a moment, Will rushed back inside and grabbed his shotgun from under the desk, and was out the door again quickly.

Hannibal’s head turned when Will rushed in, he watched him grab the gun and rush out. “Will!” Hannibal shrugged his wrinkled shirt on and ran after Will, out doors. “Will, what’s happening?”

“Can’t you hear that?” Will asked, not stopping more than long enough to cast a look back at Hannibal, loading his gun as he went, not sure what was going on out there, but if it was *his* wolf…

Will paused mid-stride, and lowered the gun, shoulders slumped. The pulsing headache was back and he was more aware now of the real and hallucinations. He took a few deep breaths,

and shook his head, walking to the shed. “Sorry. Distracted. I’ll find that ironing board.”

“What was it you heard?” Hannibal asked, following Will, barefoot and barely noticing the cool ground under the soles of his feet.

“Howling,” the profiler sighed, head down as he unlocked the shed, and pushed the door open to see if he could find his ironing board in storage there. “It wasn’t real…”

Hannibal watched Will, quietly. “I believe your wolf was real, Will, but this howling you heard was not something I heard as well. I’m sure that your wolf is fine.” Will’s wolf. Hannibal’s heart squeezed at the thought.

Will shook his head slowly as he moved through the shed and placed the gun down on a table, and started to sift through things, further back in a closet. “He wasn’t real. The howls weren’t real.” He found the board and brought it out. “I feel like I’m… fading, Hannibal. I didn’t realize it until now.”

Hannibal set the board aside and pulled Will into his arms, holding him tight and close to his chest, ironing forgotten now. “The dogs did not react to the howl just now, but you told me Buster growled at your wolf. Is Buster also hallucinating?” Hannibal asked, against Will’s curls as his well veined hands rested against Will’s back.

“I could have imagined him doing that too,” Will sighed, quietly, resting his head against Hannibal’s shoulder. He was falling apart, he could feel it. He hoped to God it wasn’t… *mental* .

“That is possible, and yet, I think Buster is such an insistent character that he would have interrupted your hallucination with reality,” Hannibal sighed, and kissed Will. “Let’s go in the house, I’ll dress, we’ll be on our way.”

Will nodded slowly, and then let go of Hannibal, gathering his gun and the board, and trotted back out, the dogs following him back to the house.

Hannibal sighed, and followed with long, silent strides to the house. He took the board from Will, and unfolded it with a creak, then used a kitchen cloth to dust off the top of it before he removed his shirt and laid it on the board to press. “Did your wolf sound distressed to you?”

“Hurt,” Will sighed. It sounded the same as it had in his dream last night when he had gone looking for him. Hurt and in distress. “I felt responsible.”

Hannibal looked at his own hand for a second, then at Will, admiringly. He was more perceptive than he knew, even with encephalitis. “I am certain he is fine,” Hannibal assured Will as he turned the iron off, and slipped his shirt on, buttoning it slowly, his injured hand difficult to work with.

Of course the wolf was fine, he *wasn’t* real. Will’s mind was creating distractions, keeping him from being directly in reality. However, Will kept it to himself, and put his gun away. “Jack isn’t going to like me being in a hospital for weeks…” Then again, what use was he like this?

“Jack will have to cope,” Hannibal said, and finished buttoning his shirt, then did the same with his vest, and managed to tie his tie, slowly, before he put his jacket on.

Will nodded slowly, he knew that, of course, but a part of him feared that Jack wouldn’t need him after all, that his talents would go to waste, or perhaps the case would go wrong and more people would die. Anxiety stuck him hard. Will rubbed his hands over his face and then grabbed his keys.

Hannibal put on his socks and shoes, and then his long, sweeping coat, and touched Will’s shoulder. “If you are ill, you need treatment, regardless of what is going on around you. The world will manage.”

The urge to just fold himself into Hannibal was a strong one, but Will Managed to keep himself as still as he possibly could. He’d relied on himself for years, he didn’t suddenly need to put in someone else’s hands, no matter how comforting. “I know.”

Hannibal wrapped his arms around Will, and pulled him close, injured hand smoothing down the back of Will’s hair as he held him. He had never really believed that he would feel this way about anyone, that he would want to hold them when they were uncertain, but here he was in the grip of a bond so powerful that he was awestruck at it’s strength, it’s command over him. “Perhaps the injury to your wolf that you imagined was a metaphor for your own injury, your own cry for help.”

“Which is it, Doctor Lecter? Is my wolf real or am I projecting?” Either way, Will knew he did need help, everything was starting to come boiling to a head. Even now in Hannibal arms, Will didn’t feel stability he knew he needed, but at least he had grounding.

“Both,” Hannibal replied, softly, against Will’s ear, then kissed his temple between curls of dark hair.

Will just smiled, faintly, and hugged Hannibal around his shoulders. “Promise me while we are there you let someone look at your burn?”

Hannibal chuckled at that, and looked at his hand, then at Will. “My own medical opinion is not enough?” he asked, amused.

“I’m concerned,” Will said, as though that ought to be enough for Hannibal, considering he was likely going to be in the hospital himself for weeks.

Hannibal looked at Will’s huge blue eyes, and his amusement softened. Will’s eyes were impossible to say no to when Will looked at him like that, it was nearly unfair. “Very well, I’ll have the burn looked at,” Hannibal promised, with a nod.

Will’s shoulders loosened from tension with that and the younger man kissed Hannibal’s mouth softly. “Thank you.”

“Shall we take my car?” Hannibal asked, as they stepped out together.

Will looked down at his keys. “Yeah.” He made sure the dogs had food, and then whistled for them back into the house, and then locked them in. He pocketed his keys.

Hannibal walked with Will to the Bentley, and opened the door for him, gallantly, then climbed in the driver’s side and drove out, toward the highway, then took Will’s hand.

“You're worried,” Will sighed, looking out the window at the scenery as they drove.

“I am concerned, yes,” Hannibal said as they reached highway speed, smoothly and quietly. “You could be facing a serious, but treatable illness.”

“Treatable means I'm not going to die,” Will assured Hannibal though some of it was for himself.

“It does, yes,” Hannibal agreed, and smoothed his thumb over the side of Will’s hand, slowly, and laced their fingers together. “Thankfully. I am not ready to say goodbye to you, yet.”

“Yet?” Will asked with an almost rueful chuckle.

“If I ever will be ready,” Hannibal added, softly. He was already well aware that he would never be ready to let go of Will.

“Attached?” Will asked with a little smile, looking over at Hannibal as his nerves about what was bound to happen seem to falter and fade. Hannibal had a strange calming effect on him.

“Thoroughly,” Hannibal admitted, and looked over at Will as he drove the car with one gloved hand. “I had never planned to become attached to anyone, to be honest. You took me quite by surprise.”

“Did I? You came to my door, Doctor Lecter,” Will said, quietly, and squeezed Hannibal’s hand, as though to say he didn’t mind at all. Will had always wanted to be attached to someone, he’d just never found that person until now.

“After meeting you in Jack’s office, I was already certain,” Hannibal confessed, and laced their fingers together more intimately.

“I recall being horrible to you,” Will admitted, sighing heavily, and looked out the window once more as Wolftrap passed them by and they headed over the county border.

“You were surly,” Hannibal laughed. “There was still something about you.”

“Often attracted to surly, brisk men?” Will asked, his head started to swim, his vision blurring as he watched the trees turn dark, gnarly.

“Not often, you are the only one,” Hannibal assured Will, unable to tell him how utterly and irreversibly true that was.

“Ever?” Will looked over at Hannibal, watching his face blur and blend, concentrating on his eyes the most.

“The only surly, brisk man I’ve ever pursued, yes,” Hannibal assured Will, and noticed the way Will looked at him. “What are you seeing, Will?”

Will looked away and rubbed his eyes with his his free hand, leaning against the door. “Same as last night. You’re switching, Wendigo to wolf, to you again…”

“Like your wolf?” Hannibal asked, curiously, and squeezed Will’s hand. “Another headache?”

The back of Will’s neck broke out into a sweat again. “Yes.” He swallowed, and pushed the window down to get a breeze. “A little one.”

“I have tylenol in the glove box,” Hannibal advised, prepared for this eventuality. “There should be a bottle of spring water in the back seat.”

The brunet rifled through the perfectly fitted glove box and found the bottle, and then popped a few of them into his mouth, able to swallow them dry but found a bottle of the water anyway to make sure they were washed down. He then sat back, and closed his eyes, resting his head against the headrest.

Hannibal let Will rest, and kept driving, never letting go of his hand. Quite a while later, he pulled into a parking space at the hospital, and looked over at Will. “We are here,” he said, softly. Hannibal’s hand was numb from being held from so long, tingling. It was a strange sort of glorious.

Will’s eyes fluttered open and he looked at Hannibal and then his surroundings, slipping out of the car slowly. “This doctor is a friend of yours you said?”

“An old associate, yes. We practiced together at Johns Hopkin’s, in the city,” Hannibal locked the car, and opened the door for Will.

Will slipped in through the door and slowly walked the halls with Hannibal at his side, not sure where he should be going, so he mostly leaned on Hannibal’s intuition. “So, trustworthy…”

“Quite,” Hannibal said, and led Will down a few corridors, then knocked on an office door. A man opened the door with a smile at Hannibal, and shook his hand, then looked at Will. “You must be Will, I’m Doctor Sutcliffe, an old friend of Hannibal’s. He’s told me all about you. How are you feeling?”

“Terrible,” Will said, foregoing pleasantries and handshakes, and swallowed down the thick dryness in his throat.

“I can see that. Well, you’re in very good hands, Dr. Lecter is an astounding physician,” Sutcliffe said with a smile at Hannibal, who chuckled and inclined his head modestly at the praise. “Let’s go into the imaging suite, right this way.”

Will looked at Hannibal and then followed, sweating dripping through his hairline slowly. “I’m aware. Not every doctor can smell illness on you…”

Hannibal removed his pocket square and blotted Will's forehead for him as they walked, then sat him down on the MRI bench in the clean, white imaging suite. "His infamous sense of smell is remarkable," Sutcliffe nodded, and went toward the control booth. "I'll let Hannibal get you comfortable, and then we'll get started."

"Don't I need to dress down for this?" Will asked, having only ever seen these sort of things talked about in television, but that *was* admittedly some time ago.

"You do," Hannibal nodded, and found a gown for Will on a shelf, then presented it to him. "You can change behind that screen, do you need help?" Hannibal offered, with a little smile in his eyes.

Will gave Hannibal a look, and touched his arm, as though to imply he would need his help, he was very sick after all. "Please."

Hannibal nodded, and helped Will behind the screen, then began to undo his flannel shirt. "I will have a lovely view of your legs in this…"

"Just my legs?" Will flirted, undoing his belt, slowly.

"Perhaps your behind, as well," Hannibal purred, and helped Will peel his jacket and shirt off, then slid his good hand against Will's ass.

Will laughed, and shook his head, letting his shirt and jacket sit on the chair just beside them for his clothes. He ran his hands up Hannibal's polished suit, over his chest. "You'll have a nice view I'm sure, from your angle."

Hannibal smiled, and undid Will's pants. "I will enjoy it while I can," he whispered, and kissed Will on the mouth as he peeled his pants and underwear off.

If the diagnosis came back with what Hannibal thought it was, this would be the last intimate moment they shared in a long, long time. Will gripped Hannibal's shoulders tightly and hugged him close as they kissed, him naked and the doctor perfectly clothed.

Hannibal wound both arms around Will, enjoying the long, slow kiss as his head spun. Will could make his heart race with just a look, it was thundering now. He pulled his lips back when Dr. Sutcliffe spoke over the intercom. "Everything okay?" he asked.

"Just fine, he's rather dizzy, one moment," Hannibal called back, smiling at Will as he managed to slip the gown over Will's arms, then moved around him to tie it in the back, and felt his ass again.

Will had to close his eyes and make himself not feel a goddamn thing just to be able to walk out of there without a massive erection. There was no hiding or adjusting it if he had. Finally, he managed, and looked at Hannibal as he was shuffled out.

Hannibal shared a little smile with Will, and helped him lay on the flat, white bench in front of the MRI machine. "This will retract into the machine which will be quite loud, but you will not be in there for long. Try not to move, if you can," Hannibal said.

Will laid down and put his hands rested over his hips, in case he had to hide anything, and then nodded, watching Hannibal as the machine started to take him into the tube.

Hannibal fixed the hem of Will's gown as the machine pulled Will into it, and the scan started. Hannibal stepped into the booth with Sutcliffe, watching as Will's scan came up on the screen. "I suspect auto-immune encephalitis," Hannibal said, and Sutcliffe's eyebrows went up. Will's scan appeared normal.

"That wouldn't show up on this scan," he said, and changed the settings, then scanned again. "And you *SMELLED* this? What did it smell like?"

"A fevered sweetness," Hannibal replied, and the new scan lit the screen: positive.

"My God…" Sutcliffe whispered, astounded.

"I once detected a professor's stomach cancer by his scent," Hannibal said, off-handedly, and Sutcliffe stared at him.

"I wonder what you smell on me…" he chuckled, and printed the scan, saving it to file, then let Will out of the machine. "I'll have him admitted right away, this is pretty severe," he sighed, looking at the scan, and Hannibal nodded, in agreement, then opened the door so they could both walk out, to Will.

"Mr. Graham, I'm afraid you have encephalitis, and we're going to have to keep you for a while," Dr. Sutcliffe explained, and Hannibal crossed to Will, to help him up.

Will was sweating horrible by now, panting a little, the gown sticking to him as he clung to Hannibal. "Figures…"

"We'll begin treatment immediately," Hannibal promised, and used his pocket square to blot Will's face again, gently as Sutcliffe stepped out to see about getting Will admitted. "You will feel better, soon."

"Clothes," Will said with a gesture, holding onto the side of the machine to keep him up right. He didn't expect to get back into them, he just wanted to have them. After all, all his medical insurance was in his wallet.

Hannibal folded Will's clothes, piled them, and brought them back to Will. He put a hand against Will's side, and kissed his forehead. "I'll do my best to manage a private room."

"Will you?" the brunet asked, panting as he tried to tease, but everything felt too hot at once, and all he wanted to do was take everything off. He ran a hand down his face, body shaking uncontrollably.

A nurse knocked, and opened the door, then came in with a chart and an iv kit. "Will Graham? I'm here to start your line," she said, and used a stool by the table to sit on as she began to look for a vein on Will's arm. Hannibal reached over and took the wristband from Will's chart, putting it on Will's wrist himself.

“I will, if your insurance will not cover it, I will,” Hannibal assured Will, softly.

Will was hardly paying much attention, the shaking had increased horribly, and his eyes rolled back in his head as a fever spread through him.

Hannibal waved off the nurse and helped Will lay back on the table, and leaned over him to cage Will in with his arms so that he did not fall off of the narrow surface. “He’s having a seizure,” Hannibal said, calmly, and let Will shake as he held him on the table, one hand behind his head to protect it against the hard surface under Will.

It didn’t last too long, and after a minute Will shook only once more and then stilled, eyes droopy and tired, cheeks fever spiked with warmth, making his blue eyes bright as he looked at Hannibal.

Hannibal eased Will down onto the table, and gestured for the nurse to start an iv on his right arm. “Will? You’ve just had a seizure. Have you ever had one before?” Hannibal asked, calmly, and removed his jacket to fold. He slipped it under Will’s head, like a pillow.

Will shook his head, drowsily. “Not… not that I know of.” His arm dangled for the nurse, not too aware of much at the moment as things swam in and out.

“Close your eyes, Will, relax,” Hannibal whispered into Will’s ear, his voice soothing and hypnotic, other-worldly as he brushed a hand over Will’s forehead. “You are utterly exhausted. Sleep. When you wake, I will be with you,” he promised Will, lips close to Will’s ear as the nurse slipped the iv into a vein on the back of Will’s forearm.

Will’s chest heaved once and then he was out.

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Hannibal’s influence, and his willingness to cover what Will’s insurance could not managed to get Will a private room. He sat in a chair next to Will’s bed with a book in hand, and a cup of tea to his right, on a nightstand. Will was hooked up to several iv lines, and covered with a clean white sheet to his waist with a fan blowing on him to help cool him off as the drugs worked in his body.

When Will finally woke, it was hours later, and he still felt horrible, barely awake. He blinked, looking around, cooler now. “Hannibal?”

“Here,” the reassuring, deep, accented voice said from Will’s left side. Hannibal shifted closer, and touched Will’s shoulder, then his face. “You had a seizure in the imaging suite, do you remember that?”

Will shook his head slowly. “I… remember the MRI, nothing else.” He turned his head to look at Hannibal, eyes narrowed, refocusing.

“A nurse came in to start your intravenous line, and you had a small seizure,” Hannibal said, with a sympathetic look. “You were quite worn after that, and you’ve been asleep for eight

hours now," Hannibal said, with a look at his watch.

"Not too long," Will hummed as his eyes closed again and he felt out his surroundings once again. "Thought it'd be longer."

"As did I," Hannibal nodded, and touched Will's chest with his hand, caressing up to the side of Will's neck. "How are you feeling now?"

"Horrible," Will said honestly, his head throbbing, but Hannibal's touch was welcomed, and reassuring.

"Your fever is coming down, slowly," Hannibal said, and caressed Will's face. "I've already been back to feed the dogs. They are fine."

"Thank you," Will whispered, breathing in and out slowly, swallowing as he looked around the quiet room.

"I've let Jack know you'll be in here for a while, he sends you his best," Hannibal said, and offered Will a glass of water from a jug on the nightstand.

Will scoffed and sat up a little more, taking the glass in his shaking hand. He wasn't seeing things anymore, at least. "How long?"

"Likely at least two weeks, possibly longer," Hannibal sighed, aware that Will was not going to like it.

"Possibly longer." Will sighed, his mind the wolf, wondering if he would come back while he was gone, if Buster would go nuts...

"Possibly, we'll have to see how you respond to the medication. It is not an overnight cure," Hannibal said.

"No, I know that. You warned me." It wasn't like Will had any choice in the matter either. Not really. He smiled up at Hannibal, weakly. "Who knows where I'd be right now if I hadn't met you."

"Likely still sweating in bed," Hannibal smiled, and pushed Will's hair back for him again. "More water?"

Will handed the cup back with a little nod, still exhausted. "Please."

Hannibal helped Will drink, holding his head up for him, then pressed the cup to his lips. "You were quite dehydrated."

"All that sweating," Will managed to murmured out around the lip of the cup and gulped down a few long sips.

"I'm alarmed that this has been making you ill for so long before I recognized the signs," Hannibal sighed.

“I’m… not very good at caring for myself,” Will admitted, swallowing more water until the cup was empty again.

“I think that may be an understatement,” Hannibal chuckled, and moved his chair closer to Will. He was clean shaven again, and his nails were filed back, perfectly.

“And meanwhile you are looking just as elegant as ever,” Will sighed, wondering if he hadn’t just dreamed Hannibal looking so… wolfish.

“I’ve had a few hours to make myself presentable,” Hannibal said, but beamed in a way that showed Will he was flattered.

“Couldn’t rub some off that off on me?” Will chuckled, and then closed his eyes for a second, taking a lot out of him to just be awake.

“You are still strangely handsome, even in a hospital gown fighting a serious condition,” Hannibal murmured, and leaned over to press a kiss to Will’s cheek that he allowed to linger on Will’s skin as he smelled it. The smell of Will’s sickness was still there, but lessening, very slowly.

The room bore evidence of Hannibal’s touch. The fluorescent overhead lights were off, and the curtains were drawn over the windows. Two small lamps that looked as though they came from a fancy office were plugged in next to Will’s bed on either side, and a vase that held a bouquet of blue irises and new plant decorated a table next to the window.

Will touched Hannibal’s hand and smiled up at him. “Thank you for saying so, but not necessary.”

“It’s not meant as cheap flattery,” Hannibal assured Will with a smile, and reached over to re-fasten a snap on the shoulder of Will’s gown that had come undone. “I was marveling at how arresting you are when you sleep.”

“Didn't get enough of that the other night?” Will said, gazing up at Hannibal this close, sighing at just how handsome the doctor was.

The gentle lighting in the room highlighted Hannibal’s aristocratic features flawlessly, and made his eyes look even warmer and more golden than usual. “Not at all. It may take years before I have enough of staring at you.”

Will just shook his head against the pillow. “You say that now.”

“I know myself, Will. I have particular tastes, but when I find a thing of beauty, I cherish it,” Hannibal said, romantically, and lifted Will’s hand to kiss the knuckles, careful to avoid his iv.

“So, no chance you’ll run off then?” Will teased, mostly, clear that he’s gone through some tough sorts in his life.

Hannibal's eyes crinkled softly at the edges, and he shook his head. Will really had no idea how little chance there was of that. "I am not running anywhere, I can promise you that," Hannibal said, with an intimate look into Will's cornflower blue eyes.

"I guess you've already seen me at my craziest anyway," Will murmured. "Not much left to see."

"You were not crazy, you were struggling to function under the weight of an illness," Hannibal reminded Will, fondly.

"It enhanced the instability and crazy," Will implored, but wouldn't argue it further.

Hannibal leaned closer, one arm resting against Will's bed where the head was raised. "Even if your scans were negative, even if all you had seen and done was a product of mental illness, I would not leave you," he said, honestly.

That was more than Will could say for a lot of people in his life, honestly. He turned his head and looked at Hannibal, and then raised a hand to touch his neck. "Known me less than a week and you're already wanting to keep me. Who's collecting strays now?"

"Perhaps you've collected me," Hannibal reasoned, with a sparkle in his eyes, and leaned against the touch of Will's hand on his neck, as though charmed by it.

Will pulled Hannibal closer by reaching his hand around his neck slowly, and carded his fingers through the hair at the nape of his neck. "Are you a stray?" Will grinned, this time it lit his eyes, despite how exhausted he looked.

"A stray wild thing, bereft of a home for decades," Hannibal whispered, and smiled at Will, hinting at the truth without saying it outright.

Still too out of it to pay too much mind to what Hannibal might mean, Will just smiled a little wider, petting down the back of Hannibal's head on instinct. "You're welcome into my home any time."

Hannibal smiled at that, and closed his eyes at the way Will petted his sleek hair, and the way Will's warm fingers trailed against the back of his neck. "I am it's guardian for a little while, it seems. I hope you don't mind, I took your keys from your coat."

"How else would you care for the pack?" Will heaved a big sigh, chest rising and falling slowly, and he rubbed the back of his fingers against Hannibal's jaw.

Hannibal turned his head against the touch with closed eyes, and smiled to himself, basking in Will's affection. "I'm sure I could manage to enter through a window, but Buster would devour me," he laughed.

"He'd sound the alarm for… no one. Was he being nicer today?" Will asked, charmed by the way Hannibal seemed to take to affection the way his dogs did.

"A little, he did eat a piece of jerky from my fingers, although he carried it far away from me, immediately," Hannibal chuckled.

“He’ll get used to you.” Will smoothed his hand down Hannibal’s chest, over the blue tie he wore.

“Perhaps by the time you’re out of the hospital, we’ll be good friends,” Hannibal sighed, lighting up at the feeling of Will’s hand there. Will’s hand anywhere was enough to make Hannibal radiant.

“I’ll do my best not to rush getting better then, so you two have time to bond,” Will teased, and then tugged on Hannibal’s tie to bring him closer.

Hannibal moved closer with a chuckle that made his eyes shine amber again. “Is this my leash, Will?”

Will hummed, and pulled Hannibal down to give him a chaste kiss. “Maybe.”

“And you have me caught by it, indeed,” Hannibal whispered between their mouths, and kissed Will again. Will had him by the heart, whether he knew it or not, though Hannibal suspected Will could not claim not to see that Hannibal was devoted, now.

"Hooked you and reeled you in,” Will whispered back, their lips brushing, a flush covering his skin, but this time not from fever.

“You are an expert fisherman, and lured a monster from the deep,” Hannibal whispered softly, then kissed Will’s lips again. They no longer held the frantic heat of his fever.

Though curious at Hannibal’s choice of words, Will kept it to himself. It wasn’t important that very second. “Caught.”

“Utterly, and completely,” Hannibal whispered, holding Will’s gaze for a moment. “Are you hungry?”

“Not really,” Will admitted, the thought of food made him nauseated. “But you’re going to tell me to try.”

“What of some toast? Nothing creative, I promise,” Hannibal said, with a soft laugh that only Will managed to bring out of him.

“Toast then,” Will agreed, sitting up a little more. Toast didn’t sound too unappealing.

Hannibal leaned over and rewarded Will with a kiss, then stood and headed to the door. “There’s a kitchen down the hall. Anything else?”

The brunet shrugged. “More water.” He was parched beyond relief, the fever breaking, he could finally keep fluids in.

“Of course,” Hannibal said, with a soft smile, and set off down the hall. A moment later he returned with a plate of golden-brown toast, lightly buttered, and another jug of ice water. He handed the toast to Will, and poured another glass of water for him. “Hardly gourmet, but it will do,” he said, with a sigh.

“I don't think I could handle your gourmet cooking just yet, as good as it is,” Will said, taking a biting of the toast, and then a long sip of water.

“Perhaps I’ll make soup, when you’re feeling up to it,” Hannibal mused, and watched Will eat with a devoted expression. “Your heart rate is down, thankfully, it was dangerously high when you were admitted.”

“You look less worried,” Will pointed out, oddly fond of the expression on Hannibal’s face, a look he felt he never truly, honestly elicited from anyone before.

“With good reason,” Hannibal said, and rested one hand on Will’s thigh after he sat down, just to keep touching him. “You could barely walk.”

“Don't look too relieved yet then. I haven't tested that part out,” Will said with a little lopsided smirk, biting into his toast again, bigger bites this time.

“You’re no longer in danger of having a seizure.” Hannibal filed away the sight of Will’s little smirk in his memory palace. “It was not a terrible seizure, but large enough,” Hannibal sighed, and caressed Will’s face, then kissed his forehead.

The soothing presence of Hannibal always seemed to calm Will, even if there was an edge of darkness him, it was a darkness Will felt akin to. “Any seizure is a bad one.”

“I’ll have to take your word for it, I’ve never experienced one, myself,” Hannibal chuckled. “I’ve witnessed many of them, yours was the most distressing.”

“First I’ve had, but I hear they aren’t pleasant as far as medical issues go,” Will said, taking up the other piece of toast. Now that he’d eaten something, he felt a little better.

“They aren’t unusual with encephalitis,” Hannibal said, “hopefully, you won’t have any more now. Do you recall what you said you were hallucinating? I was apparently a wendigo, and a wolf…”

“A little,” Will said, trying to think back. “Must have been some… fever.” He recalled it just fine, but the implication it implied of him toward Hannibal, he was sure was rude.

“You did not seem distressed, merely fascinated,” Hannibal noted as he poured another glass of ice water for Will. “Do you still worry your wolf is entirely due to the inflammation of your brain’s lining?”

“I don’t know. Hard to know what was real or not.” Will finished the toast and then sipped on the water, slowing down a little.

“I hope your judgement was not sufficiently impaired that you regret becoming entangled with me,” Hannibal said, softly, watching Will with keen interest. They were tangled, like fishing line in a knot that could never be untied, only cut through.

“You’re the only clear thing I’ve seen in a long time,” Will admitted, quietly, and drank the last bit of his water.

“For that, I’m very grateful. I’m far too enamoured to let go of you now,” Hannibal admitted softly, with a hard swallow. It was agonizing to be this bound to another person, to be at their mercy. Will could crush his heart with a careless choice, vulnerability was not something a man like Hannibal Lecter was used to having to bear.

“Then don’t.” Will never attached easily, but like with his dogs, he had grown fond of Hannibal quickly. They got along fine after their first rebuttal, and Will couldn’t even see now why he’d been so sour toward the doctor.

It had been mostly Jack, honestly. Ambushed was not something Will Graham liked to be.

Hannibal leaned forward, and kissed Will’s lips as though he was utterly unable to stop himself from kissing him. Will brought out the best in him, and so far, seemed to accept the worst.

“Are we allowed to be kissing?” Will asked, coy, and reached up to tug Hannibal in for another one, even if they weren’t.

“You’re under a physician’s supervision…” Hannibal whispered against the next kiss, bent over Will like a willow tree over a stream.

“True. I’m in good hands then?” Will asked, quietly.

“I don’t think you’ve recovered quite enough to allow me to take you into my hands, yet,” Hannibal whispered with a twinkle in his dark eyes.

“When I’ve recovered then…”

Chapter 6

Chapter by beforethedawn, Destinyawakened

Three weeks later, Will was finally let out of the hospital, mostly due to his complaining enough that they said he could go. Hannibal drove him home, and the dogs met him at the door with furious licks and jumping, despite what Will had said to them to keep them behaved. All in all, it was good to be home.

The dogs tore around, running around the house with utter, uncontainable joy, and Hannibal watched with an indulgent smile as he shut the door behind Will, and carried a bag of medications for him. “They seem to remember you,” Hannibal said, dryly.

“Thank God. I was worried,” Will snarked, just a little, feeling much better than he had. He took a good look around and realized his place was… clean, orderly. Dusted. Hair free. “Wow…”

“I have been living here, more or less. The only time I had aside from seeing my clients and visiting you was late in the evening and at night. I hope you don’t mind,” Hannibal said, and removed his long coat to hang on the hat rack near the door, then held his hand out for Will’s.

Will’s house looked like itself, of course, but polished. His bed was smartly made, with a few extra, plush pillows to give it a more pleasant look, and new sheets. The house smelled like orange oil and there was not a streak on a window or a picture frame to be seen.

“So you don’t sleep? You clean?” Will chuckled, slipping out of his coat. “I don’t mind, but it wasn’t… I mean… was it bad?”

“Not at all,” Hannibal said, graciously, and hung Will’s coat for him, then picked Percy up, and put her in Will’s arms. “Sleep eludes me on a regular basis. I prefer to put my waking hours to good use rather than use them tossing and turning.”

“Maybe you’ll sleep better with me around, like before,” Will suggested, aware he slept better with Hannibal, or had the once before the fever struck viciously.

“I’m sure I will,” Hannibal said softly, and glanced at himself in the mirror, as though checking for something, then walked into the kitchen. “I’ve made some stew, if you’re hungry. I find stew is always better after a day of sitting in the refrigerator…”

“Sure,” Will said, coming up behind Hannibal to hug him. He hadn’t had a proper one of those in three weeks. “Sounds good.”

Hannibal turned in Will’s arms, and hugged him properly, ignoring the snarl of his own ravenous stomach a little longer to hold Will close. “I’ve made sure the fridge is very, very well stocked, call it a force of habit.”

“Thank you,” Will said, gazing up at Hannibal with blue eyes so much brighter than they had been weeks ago when Will was ill with fever. “I’d probably just leave it with the basics otherwise.”

“Nonsense, you need to eat, especially protein,” Hannibal whispered, and stared at the almost suffocating blue of Will’s eyes before he kissed his lips, gently, then pulled back, running his tongue over his teeth, almost nervous.

Will eyed Hannibal carefully, and then smiled at him. “That’s your way of saying I should eat,” he said, and kissed Hannibal once more, filing away the look for later.

Hannibal smiled at Will and opened the fridge. It was spotlessly clean, and absolutely stuffed with what looked like an endless assortment of meat dishes, all impeccably wrapped and sorted. Hannibal pulled out a large ceramic pot with a matching lid, and put it on the scrubbed down stove to re-heat, slowly. “It will take a little time, at any rate.”

Will’s table was covered with a crisp white tablecloth now, and the stools at the breakfast bar decorated with perfectly fitted cushions.

“It looks like a fairy godmother came in and fairy dusted the place,” Will murmured, still taking in all the little changes that were definitely not him.

Hannibal looked back at Will with an arched eyebrow and a little flash of amber in his eyes. “I may have tidied a little, swept the floor … oh, a spring in your mattress attempted to remove one of my kidneys in the middle of the night when it worked it’s way through the fabric cover and sheet. I took the liberty of replacing it.”

“You changed my mattress…” Will sighed; it was a lot to take in honestly.

“Your mattress was no longer functional,” Hannibal assured Will, and guided him into the living room, to the bed, and sat him on the much, much nicer mattress. It’s quality was palpable even through the blankets.

“You know, they say you should try out mattresses before buying one,” Will said, though the mattress was nice, he’d sort of worn the side of the bed to his preference. Will leaned back on the new bed with his hands, looking up at Hannibal. “Thank you.”

“I’m sorry if the mattress is too much of a surprise, I didn’t want you to come home after a long hospital stay and sleep on something broken,” Hannibal sighed. “I did my best to guess what you might prefer based on your old mattress, I can always exchange this for something you’ve selected, if you like,” he offered, politely, and ran his hand over the blankets as he shifted his jaw.

“Can’t exchange something used,” Will said, and shook his head. Despite being better, he was still overly tired. “It’s fine. I’m a little overwhelmed is all.” He leaned forward now on his knees, rubbing his hands over his eyes.

Hannibal sighed through his nose, as though marshalling his patience, and rubbed a hand over his own jaw. It was already rough with stubble, and he’d shaved before collecting Will

from the hospital. “Then I suppose I owe you a new one.”

Will dropped his hands between his legs, dangling there and looked up at Hannibal. “It’s fine, Hannibal. I just didn’t expect so much change when I got back. I just… I need to reacquaint.” Will knew his floor plan in his sleep, little things were changed, but this was going to likely disrupt the flow.

Hannibal sighed, and stood, heading back into the kitchen. Will was clearly not happy about the little improvements that Hannibal had thought were *thoughtful*. “It will feel like home again in no time at all,” he managed, politely, from the kitchen, busy with something.

“You’re upset,” Will said, suddenly in the kitchen with Hannibal, watching him.

“It is disappointing to know one’s gift is not appreciated,” Hannibal said, with measured calm as he stirred the stew in the pot. The smell of food began to waft through the air as it warmed, and his stomach roared beneath the three piece suit.

“If I brought you a flea ridden dog as a gift, wouldn’t you be a little put off? Surprised? I’m not ungrateful, just surprised. I… had things just *so* ,” Will explained, a tilt of his head. Hannibal was much more easily stressed today.

The changes weren't bad, but they weren't Will, or he might have done them himself, being the handy sort. He sighed. “I'm not ungrateful. You did me a favor with my dogs and then some. The bed is fine. I would have had to break in a new one at some point…”

The sound of a wine bottle opening punctuated the silence, and after a moment, Hannibal stepped out of the kitchen, a glass of red in his hand. “Lesson learned, in that case.”

Will followed, slowly, still recovering, he was still sluggish. “Are you going to be mad at me all night?”

Hannibal exhaled a long sigh, and regarded Will with eyes that could not manage to be angry with the blue-eyed, cherubic man. “I am disappointed, not angry.”

Disappointment was just as bad as angry, and Will had seen a lot of thrown at him in his life. He shifted his jaw, head tilted into a slow nod. “Well, welcome to the club on that one.”

“You’re disappointed with me?” Hannibal asked, his hand tightening around his wine glass

Will shook his head. “No, in being disappointed with me. I’m not unused to that. You saw Jack’s face when I missed the meeting…”

“You were ill, there was a very good reason for that,” Hannibal said, rationally, over his wine glass.

Will shrugged and took a seat again, exhausted even still. “Sure.”

Hannibal sipped his wine, and looked at Will, as though he could see through him. “Do you find it an uncomfortable feeling?”

“To have people disappointed? I’ve been a disappointment my whole life.” Will shook his head, incredulously. “I’m familiar with it, if anything.”

“Are you consciously hoping that by pointing out that being a source of disappointment is part of your identity, that I will stop being disappointed and feel pity instead? Guilt, perhaps?”

“You can be whatever you want to be with me, Hannibal. Do I feel bad for not liking the changes I wasn’t told about? A little maybe, because you put some thought into it, but at the same time, you…” Will sighed, it didn’t matter honestly.

“I made a presumption, an educated guess as to what you might like, and how you might feel about the changes. All gifts are risks, a socially accepted demonstration of how well we know one another. I clearly miscalculated,” Hannibal said, calmly, and took another long swallow of his wine, then went into the kitchen to refill his glass.

Well, that was a good way to get Will to feel like an ass. “They aren’t terrible, they just weren’t needed. Maybe the bed, but that was a pricey investment you didn’t need to buy.”

Hannibal looked at Will, with subtle amusement after he came out of the kitchen again, glass already half empty, and stew smelling more and more intense as it heated on the stove. “More expensive than some dinners, yes, but hardly anything that will put me in the poor house,” he said, mysteriously.

Clearly, Will did not have the money Hannibal did, and a new bed would have set him back quite a bit. “Good to know…” he murmured.

Hannibal looked at the bed as he walked around it, and sipped the wine to calm his frayed, raw nerves today. It was hardly the ideal day for Will to come home, but Hannibal had been so eager to have him out of the hospital, that he could not make an excuse. “It’s not a brag, of course, but if you are embarrassed by the cost, please don’t be. Expense is relative to one’s resources.”

“And I’m very limited on resources.” Will was not ashamed of what he had or what he worked for, he spent any extras on the dogs or the things the houses needed to be kept in shape. Nothing more, nothing less.

“Precisely, I thought a gift might be a thoughtful gesture at a time when you are struggling,” Hannibal said, and sat on the edge of the bed, then finished his wine. “Do you resent the implication that I know you well enough to alter the space of your living environment?”

Will was overwhelmed, just a little bit, but he kept that to himself. “No. It’s fine.” He didn’t use tablecloths because of the dogs, they would get to it sooner or later, and the pads on the stools would somehow work their way off and become torn apart, like a favorite stuffed toy of one of them, likely the slower female dog.

The slower dog, meanwhile, had just caught on that Will was home, and ran around him in happy circles, wagging. “I’ve been meaning to ask, what is her name?” Hannibal asked, watching the dog he suspected was intellectually disabled react to Will’s homecoming.

“That’s Rose. She’s… special,” Will said, reaching his hand out to greet her and let her get her paws up on his legs to make sure it was really him.

Hannibal watched as the large, black, tan and white dog sniffled at Will, and then kissed his face a few times, excited. “I have noticed she’s not quite as sharp as the others. One day, the sun shone through a glass of water I left on the table, and made a rainbow on the wall. She spent ten minutes trying to eat the colored light. Where did you find her?”

“Shelter,” Will explained, simply, glad the topic of his house and gifts set out by Hannibal was put the side. “She was going to be put down.”

“Every time I come into the house, she seems to meet me again, for the first time. Did she suffer head trauma?” Hannibal asked, and held his hand out to Rose, who noticed it, and sniffed Hannibal’s hand, investigating him like a stranger before she wagged slowly, and allowed the doctor to pet her a little.

“She was hit by a truck. They didn’t think she’d make it. No one wants to take care of a dog like that…” Will sighed, watching. “It’s taken a few years for her to know this is home, I’m home…”

Hannibal sighed, and knelt by Rose. She sniffed his elegant features curiously, and ruffled his swept back hair with her nose, then pushed her nose against Hannibal’s cheek like a stamp of approval, and licked his chin, like a puppy appealing to an older, bigger packmate for approval. Hannibal petted her with both hands, able to communicate back to her without words, calming her as he let her lick his now scruffy chin, assuring her she was accepted.

“Someone had to care for her though,” Will said, watching her as she wagged and wagged, obviously fond of Hannibal.

“She’s happy, and safe,” Hannibal said as Rose became distracted by the bed covers, and he sat on the bed again, still petting her back slowly as he pawed at the fabric, not sure if it was alive or not. “You’ve done well by her, and the others.”

Buster seemed more relaxed around Hannibal by far, he was snoring in a large dog bed that looked new, and obscenely plush.

Will had noticed the new beds, but was in no mood to keep pointing to things out to surly Hannibal. “I try.”

Rose stopped pawing at the blanket, and noticed Will was home again, going into her excited dance all over again, which made Hannibal smile, somewhat wistfully. “You have a lot of space in your heart for creatures who are different, by birth or circumstance…”

“Well, someone has to,” Will whispered and hugged the dog to his chest, rubbing her belly with one hand, to reassure her.

She licked Will’s face again, greeting him home, and sniffed at his bandaged iv sites before she fetched an old, ragged teddy bear toy, and jumped on the bed with it to chew as she rested against Will’s stomach.

Hannibal watched Will, and felt his eyes water, almost without warning. He stood, and went back into the kitchen to stir the stew again, and take a deep breath. It was a very bad idea to socialize today, of all days. Usually, he had the wisdom to sequester himself with a book or two, a hot bath and his harpsichord, but Will had over-ridden all of Hannibal's hard-earned wisdom on the subject. "Very nearly ready."

"Good. I am feeling...famished," Will said, his stomach rumbling against Rose's head where she left it, happy to gaze up at him for now, tail wagging.

"As am I," Hannibal said with the air of understatement. His hands shook a little as he plated the food and he bit the inside of his cheek at a bad cramp in his back before he cut fresh bread, and set their food on a tray and brought it out. "Lunch in bed, it's hardly brunch, but it will have to do for now."

"It's fine," Will assured the good doctor and smiled at him as he sat, one hand on Rose who seemed to need him near right now to be grounded. "Thank you, Hannibal, for… everything."

Hannibal's eyes met Will's over the food, and he felt tension relax in his chest like the unlocking of strong jaws. Perhaps that was all he needed, to hear Will thank him. "You're welcome. I apologize if I am somewhat out of sorts today," he said, politely, and pulled up a chair close to the bed, then sat with his own tray of dinner, and tried not to eat too quickly and betray his ravenous hunger.

"After my out of sorts, I think you're allowed. The dogs get a little nuts on full moons too," Will explained, as Buster barked, running around the livingroom.

Hannibal gave Will a tired smile, and relaxed as he ate, as though it had been hunger alone winding him tight under his smooth exterior. "The moon is powerful enough to pull entire oceans with it's presence, what chance have ordinary beings of flesh and bone?"

"I'll just have to be sure to feed them early and get them out for a good run around before bed," Will said, scooping some of his stew with a spoon into his mouth.

Hannibal paced himself, eating slowly, and considered what Will said with a little smile. "I'm certain that will do them some good. Have they had any trouble with wild animals?"

"No." Will shoved another spoonful into his mouth. "I won't let them out late enough for that."

"That's a comfort," Hannibal sighed, already done with his lunch in spite of himself. He stood, and exited into the kitchen to take a little more. "When you are ready for seconds, let me know. Would you care for anything besides water?"
Hannibal chastised himself for being a terrible host, then remembered he was not at home.

"I'm okay. My doctor says I can't have alcohol with my medication, so water is fine," Will chuckled, eating slowly.

Hannibal returned with a second plate, and watched Will's curls fall into his blue eyes before he took another bite of the stew, and wished he could sleep next to Will tonight. "Despite your feelings about the mattress, is it nice to be in your own bed?"

"Yes. Nice to have the dogs near, and not be alone for once," Will said, and shook his head, "Well, nurses don't count." He licked his spoon clean and looked up at Hannibal. "You… are staying right?" Will had hoped, anyway, but maybe he was too presumptuous.

"Yes," Hannibal nodded, and paused, "assuming you'd like me to stay, of course." His heart sank as he realized he'd either have to drug Will, or come up with an emergency that would call him away, likely with a patient.

"I'd like you to." Not completely well yet, Will didn't want a relapse, and if he were honest, he didn't want to spend another night without Hannibal.

"I'd be happy to," Hannibal said, and touched Will's hair with one hand, able to feel grit from the hospital that he hadn't quite washed out. Will's hair was still soft, though, and smelled divine … like *Will* . All Hannibal wanted to do in that minute was curl up with Will, bury his nose in the brown curls, and sleep.

"It'd mean alot to me," Will emphasized, with a smile, and set his dish aside on the side of the bed, where Rose licked it clean.

Hannibal picked up Will's dishes with his own, and leaned over him to kiss his lips, softly, all of his previous irritation gone. "I'd be delighted to christen the new, and controversial mattress with you tonight," he whispered.

That set Will at ease --his shoulders relaxing-- in ways he never knew he needed. Another body next to him had been nice the last time, before the fever. "I'd be delighted to have you."

Hannibal couldn't resist, and eased himself down into the bed. His body ached, throbbing at the back of his neck, at the base of his spine, and his muscles cramped as they prepared themselves for what was to come. "It's difficult to be close in a hospital bed."

Will gently pushed Hannibal over with one hand to his shoulder and leaned over him, gazing down into the doctor's amber gaze with a soft smile. "It is. I like this better." Though they only shared kisses at the hospital, they had gotten much closer, harder to be separated.

There was more to intimacy than how often and how much they touched. At the hospital seeing Will at his most vulnerable day in and day out, talking with him when Will was up to it, simply sharing the disaster was a way to bond. It brought them closer, mending them like stitches through the heart. "So do I, much, much better."

Leaning in, Will kissed Hannibal softly on the mouth, sharing the taste of their lunch and the faint tinge of wine on Hannibal's lips. "I like our privacy here better too."

Hannibal cupped the back of Will's head with one hand, and kissed him more deeply, chest to chest with him, heart pounding with the sudden excitement of Will's lips against his own. "Agreed…" he almost purred.

Will moved, straddling Hannibal's lean hips, chests together as they kissed, deeper and more passionately, a simple slip of tongues igniting a fire in Will that had nothing to do with the fever he'd been hospitalized for. "Mm," he hummed, against Hannibal's mouth, the magnetic pull was almost too much.

Hannibal arched under Will and slipped his hands up, under Will's shirt at the back, palming the smooth skin and muscle there, careful not to scratch at him right now. "Will-" Hannibal groaned.

"All I can do is think about you," Will confessed between heated kisses. "When you're gone. Even when you're right here." He sat up and pulled his own shirt off, over his head, thermal discarded to the side of the bed.

Hannibal groaned, and looked Will's bare torso over, then pulled Will over him and kissed him hard, almost desperately, as he pulled his jacket off, then his vest, moving with urgency to feel their bare skin together. "You never leave my mind, not for a second…"

"Never?" Will breathed helping Hannibal out of his clothes and then raked his hands down his bare chest, into the coarse hair that seemed so much thicker today than the last time he'd seen him like this.

"Never. Even when with patients, you linger there, watching them with me…" Hannibal confessed, and kissed Will more deeply, hungrily, shaking a little like he was trying to hold himself back.

Will licked inside Hannibal mouth for that, to taste his words and promises, grinding his hips down on the doctor's with a needy grunt. "In your memory palace?"

"In every room, you've taken over," Hannibal moaned, and ran his hands down Will's thighs before he undid Will's pants, eagerly.

Will shimmied out of his pants and undid Hannibal's, eager to feel him, limb to limb, chest to chest. "Let's make more memories…"

"A beautiful thought," Hannibal groaned as they were stripped, and pulled Will over him with a hot kiss to the side of his throat as he palmed Will's ass with both hands, and arched up, against him.

A shudder flittered through Will, down his spine and into pooling lust in his lower back, sliding their cocks together slowly. "Guide me."

Hannibal's pupils spread wide and black at the words, and he kept arching against Will, then wrapped one hand around both of them to increase the friction. "Would you like to feel me inside you?" Hannibal asked, in a low, breathless voice.

Will swallowed thickly. He nodded; "Yes."

Hannibal leaned up to kiss the answer from Will's lips with a hot sweep of his tongue inside Will's mouth as he stroked him. "Lay next to me on the bed, face down," Hannibal instructed.

The brunet hummed at that, and kissed Hannibal once more before dropping a his side, and then rolled to his stomach, which fluttered with nervous butterflies, but quickly squelched it with a burning pulse of lust.

Hannibal rolled over, and crawled down, then laid over Will. He began to kiss each of the bumps of Will's spine, working his way downward. His palms caressed Will's back, then his ass, kneading and spreading the muscle as Hannibal's lips touched the small of Will's back.

Never had Will been touched so intimately. He writhed and arched into every touch, Hannibal's hands like hot stone against his skin. "Mm," he hummed, bringing knees up and under him, spreading his thighs out before Hannibal.

"Perfect," Hannibal whispered against the firm, pale round of Will's ass. He kept kissing his way down, between the spread cheeks, and then swiped his tongue against Will's entrance, slowly, introducing Will to what it felt like to be touched there.

Will gasped something like a curse, biting his hand to keep from doing it too loud, even if it hardly mattered. "Hannibal…"

Hannibal grinned at the sound of Will's gasp, and plunged his tongue into him a little, hot, strong, and perfectly wet. His tastebuds rasped against Will's nerves. The professor either against the sheets, ass pert and grinding back against Hannibal's wet muscle.

Hannibal spread Will's ass with his hands, and groaned as he pressed his tongue in, further, then drew it back, easing Will into the exquisite sensation of being tongued.

Gasps became louder, more drawn out as Hannibal licked and prodded Will open, never knowing just how fantastic *that* spot could feel. "God, Hannibal."

There was something incredible about being the first to show Will this particular sort of rapture. Hannibal began to let his tongue circle around the outer rim of Will's pucker between deep plunged, and reached under him with one hand to handle his cock. Hannibal groaned into Will's flesh at how perfectly hard Will was now, and the groan made his tongue, teeth and lips vibrate.

Gripping the sheets tightly, his weight sinking into the bed a little more, Will's jaw dropped at the sensation, utterly flushed and unabashedly turned on to the point that all he could do was moan parts of words.

His senses even sharper than usual right now, Hannibal listened to Will struggle to speak under the weight of physical bliss. His warm, tight body, the way he gripped the sheets, the sound of his voice was all utterly stunning. Hannibal curled his tongue against the bit of smooth wall inside Will's body caressing it for a second before he pulled away, gasping. It was just a taste, after all. He reached into the nightstand drawer and pulled out a bottle that he'd hidden there. A moment later, two of Hannibal's long fingers curled into Will, spreading him slowly.

"Oh-" Will keened back and breathing out raggedly, glancing over his shoulder at Hannibal, flushed and all but panting now. Whatever Hannibal was doing, it was driving him wild, and

making it hard for Will to stay still.

Their eyes met, and Hannibal leaned over Will to bite at and kiss his shoulder muscle, and the side of his neck. “Breathe, Will…”

Hannibal’s eyes were dark and wild at the same time, and Will could do nothing more than stare for a gaped mouth moment, trying to slow his breath. His thighs spread a little more as Hannibal worked him open.

“Perfect,” Hannibal groaned, and rubbed his fingertips over the sensitive spot inside Will that he had pressed his tongue over before, watching for his reaction. “Up on your knees, your ass back, toward me…”

A shiver of pleasure ran through the brunet at the touch, limbs trembling slightly from none use to get back to his hands and knees, but managed. “Hannibal…” he said, over his shoulder, feeling opened and somewhat raw like to the other man.

Hannibal shifted closer to Will, on his knees, and pulled his fingers from Will’s body slowly, then caressed Will’s ass before he gripped Will’s hips with both hands, and rubbed his slicked cock along the cleft. “Do you want me inside you?” he asked, again, already throbbing with lust.

If Hannibal inside him felt as good as his fingers did, then yes, Will definitely did. “Please,” he moaned, not begging, but wanting.

Hannibal leaned over Will and kissed his ear, holding his chest as he wrapped one arm around Will, then the other over his stomach, and pressed his cock inside, very slowly, working it’s girth past Will’s tight ring of muscle, and then inside him with a groan.

Will shook as Hannibal eased in, his head dropping as a low groan escaped past his lips. “Hannibal-” he managed to breath out, trying to relax, chest heaving against the doctor’s hands.

Hannibal rocked himself inside Will, carefully, but Will was slick with lube and from Hannibal’s tongue, already pliant and hot. “Yes?” Hannibal purred, the sound rattling around inside his broad, hairy chest before it escaped his lips. He thrust, slowly, shallowly to start, each arch and snap of his hips growing bigger every time.

Will let out sigh with each snap, though slow for now, he imagined how painfully perfect it would feel to have Hannibal’s cock beat against his prostate, relentlessly. He rolled his hips back to meet the doctor’s. “Don’t stop.”

That was all the assurance Hannibal needed that Will liked being taken. He pulled Will closer, with both arms, and began to beat his hips against the pale round of Will’s ass, making it go pink with friction. “Will … “ there were no words for how perfect it felt, far more than mere diversion, seduction out of boredom, which was what Hannibal usually indulged in. Will was … perfection itself.

Dropping to his forearms, Will's ass presented itself more thoroughly to Hannibal, still on his knees, taking Hannibal in deeper. His mouth hung open as he panted out heavy breaths as his blood flushed with pleasure, pooling deep in his spine. "Harder-"

Hannibal's hands moved to Will's hips, and gripped them as he straightened to pound into Will's body with sharp slaps of their skin. "Spread your thighs," Hannibal growled, more turned on than he had ever been in his life.

Will spread further, his hips dipping slightly as he did, cock hanging lower, rubbing the leaking tip against the bed. "There?"

"Fuck-" Hannibal swore. The word escaped his lips quickly, a rare profanity from the usually articulate man as he lost himself in the sensation of starting to fuck Will, hard enough to make the bed slam against the wall, his entire body flexing with the movement.

Will's fingers clawed at the new bed, sinking in more with the weight of them pushed together like this. He glanced over his shoulder at Hannibal, eyes dark with lust. His body was on fire, lava heat bubbling in his lower back, threatening to explode in fiery orgasm.

Hannibal's eyes were almost black, and shining, his face flushed, muscles flexing as his nails clawed against Will's hips, and he began to feel himself wind tighter and tighter inside, like a cello string being tuned. "Will-" he snarled before his head fell back and he made an inhuman, desperate sound and clenched his teeth, trying to hold it back.

Reaching back for Hannibal with one hand, Will gripped the other man's hand where it was on his hip, holding him there, pressing back up again Hannibal as their pace got harder and faster, making it hard for Will to even know what part of him wasn't throbbing with pleasure. "Hannibal…" he breathed, the pooling starting to spread, and his balls that familiar winding up, and his toes tensed in the sheets.

"Come, Will," Hannibal gasped, his lips close to Will's ear as he bent over him again, their bodies moving together so hard and fast that it felt like they were fusing inside, becoming one in every possible way. "Come with my cock inside you…"

Writhing uncontrollably, Will bucked back twice and then started to reel, coming in droves against his clean linen sheets and bedspread, gasping and gripping the bed until his knuckles turned white. "Fuck-"

Hannibal clamped his jaws tight against what almost sounded like a howl of pleasure in his throat as he came unravelled at his seams, filling Will where he was buried deep inside him. Hannibal's eyes closed, and his heart thundered in his ears. When he opened his eyes again, he was laying against Will's back, with his arms still wrapped around Will's waist, hands at his hips, tingling from head to toe. "Will…

Will had collapsed against the bed, unable to keep himself up, in a blissful spacing out as he gazed at the door and then turned his head to look at Hannibal, bright blue irises boring into him, but a smile on his face. "Worth getting better for."

Hannibal smiled at that, and pressed his lips against Will's in a slow, hazy kiss that made his nerves crackle all over again. "Worth waiting for your recovery for," Hannibal whispered.

Though recovered, Will was hardly one hundred percent, and his limbs felt like jello under his weight, so he stayed there, and curled back into Hannibal's hot, increasingly hairy form. "I could stay like this the rest of the day with you."

"I cannot imagine anything more blissful," Hannibal sighed, and curled around Will, then kissed the back of his neck, and caressed Will's arm with his fingertips. "I've imagined being with you like that, over and over. My imagination paled in contrast to what you are really like."

"I wasn't too horrible then?" Will asked, tipping his head back to look at Hannibal as they lay on their sides, Hannibal curled around Will.

Hannibal gave Will a look with his amber eyes, and craned his head over to kiss Will soundly on the lips in reply. "I will not dignify that with an answer," he smiled.

"That's not a no," Will whispered against Hannibal's, mouth, growing content and pliable in Hannibal's arms, warmth taking himself, making him drowsy.

"I would say that you were, by far, not horrible in the least," Hannibal whispered back, and snuggled in closer behind Will, his body heavy and content.

Will reached behind him and put his hand on Hannibal's thigh, rubbing. "Good." He nestled in his ass against the doctor's hips, fingers stroking through thick hair. "Are you getting hairier?" he teased.

"It seems that way, does it not?" Hannibal sighed, and kissed Will's shoulder. "You don't seem to mind."

"I don't." It was just strange to Will, boggling really, but his mind was drifting, falling asleep quickly where his body was too exhausted to continue.

It was now late in the afternoon, approaching evening, and Hannibal sighed, deeply at the failing light that struggled through the windows. "Sleep, Will," he whispered against Will's hair.

"Sorry," Will apologized, quietly, unable to keep his eyes opened, fluttering them closed.

"Don't be sorry," Hannibal whispered again, and rubbed Will's arm with his palm to soothe him into a slumber.

Hannibal held Will that way until the sun sank too low, too close to the horizon for safety, and slipped out of the warm, comfortable bed with a heavy sigh, then looked at his phone. It was time to prepare. He dressed, and walked closer to Will, then kissed his cheek. "Will, I've had a call from a patient, I have to meet them in an emergency room. I'll be back as soon as possible," he murmured into Will's ear, wondering if Will would wake.

Having not heard Hannibal's phone, Will blinked his eyes open. "What? You're leaving now?"

Hannibal touched Will's shoulder, and leaned closer to kiss his face, apologetically. "A patient of mine is in crisis, I'll be back as soon as possible," he promised, and pulled the blankets up, around Will. "Hopefully before you wake."

Will frowned, not feeling like arguing, he curled into the warm spot Hannibal left. "Okay…" He was tired, exhausted and could barely move right now.

Hannibal wanted nothing more than to stay in bed with Will, all night. That was, however, not possible. "I will see you soon, sleep well," he promised, and kissed Will's cheek, then his lips, pulling back only when he could feel the familiar ache in his bones that told him it was time to ready himself. He stepped back, took his coat, and left for his car with a heavy heart.

Will's heart ached to see Hannibal go, but there was no making him return, even if Will felt as though he were being left, especially after having finally having sex with Hannibal. No use worrying over it when he could barely keep his eyes open. He drifted, into a deep sleep…

Sometime past two in the morning, Will walked, still asleep, down the road side of the main street, barefoot and just in boxers, the March weather was still quite freezing.

Will's bare feet shuffled on the asphalt, breath fogging in the cold air in white, thin clouds.

A nose touched the small of Will's back from behind, as though trying to wake him.

In his mind, Will was following something, the Wendigo, across a field, through sludgy, cold water. He turned sharply, at the touch, unfocused eyes searching but not *seeing* .

The wolf was there, walking behind Will. He nudged his stomach, gently, trying to wake him with a grunt.

Ever so gently, the brunet came to, blinking sleepy eyes awake, his body automatically shivering. His fingers of his right hand grasped into tawny fur tightly. "Where-"

The wolf nudged Will's hand, and then licked his fingers, softly, before he stood up and licked Will's face. Will breathed in deeply and looked at the wolf, in the eye, realizing who it was, the wolf from last month. Not a figment at all.

"You're back…" Will whispered, teeth chattering.

The wolf put his paws on Will's shoulders and licked his chin again, then stepped down and nudged him back toward the house.

Will looked around to see where he was, clearly aware he'd been distressed when Hannibal left. He turned, and walked back, carefully to the road his house was on. "How did you find me?" His feet hurt, the frozen, cold road rubble had been cutting up his feet for a good near mile.

The enormous wolf looked just has he had last time, golden-eyed and strong. He leaned down to smell Will's feet as he walked, as though concerned, and stayed close to Will as they made their way down the highway. The wolf's dense, soft fur brushed against Will's leg with every step.

Talking to a wolf, Graham? Will chided himself for it, but stayed close, well aware the wolf was walking him back *home* . "Surprised to see you again…"

The wolf responded, looking up at Will when he talked, and nudged Will's palm in reply, encouraging the man to stroke his fingers through the wolf's fur. Will did, gently tugging between the pads of his fingers, and then stroked down with his palm. The walk was slow, and by the time they reached the drive to Will's house, the brunet was wanted nothing else than to curl back up into bed and sleep, with the wolf.

Who seemed, at least, to want to be here.

The wolf followed Will up the steps of the little white house, and looked at Will hopefully when they reached the door. The full moon was bright, lighting the wolf up in sterling and little strands of black and bronze in his coat.

"This all depends on the dogs," Will said to the wolf, opening the door that had been unlocked since he slept walked out.

The wolf wiped a paw against the boot mat, and stepped inside. The dogs were awake, waiting for Will to come home. Oddly enough, they looked at the wolf, sniffed the air, and seemed to accept him immediately. Buster gave two barks, and went back to bed as the others trotted over to greet Will.

"Huh," Will hummed, thoughtfully, and shut the door, greeting the dogs, and made sure they all had food and water before getting the wolf some, just in case. Only then did he pull out the first aid kit and sit up on the sink counter to pull out gravel from his wounded feet.

The wolf ignored his food, and sat near Will as Rose approached Will, and tried to lick his wounded feet. The wolf nudged her back, gently, each time she tried.

Will raised a brow at the two, and gently pet Rose when his hands were free, and then washed them in the sink. She didn't know much better. He washed his feet in the sink carefully and bandaged them up with some gauze and tape, for now.

Once Will's feet were bandaged, the wolf approached his bowl, and ate the home-cooked food quickly.

Will looked through his bag of medications, watching the wolf with his own keen blue eyes and popped a few of this pills he knew he'd forgotten about, and then went to sit down on the side of the bed, giving Rose reassuring pets.

Rose leaned against Will's hand, and didn't move an inch when the wolf jumped up onto the bed with a sigh, and settled against Will. None of the dogs seemed concerned at all after Buster's two barks. It was as though they knew him.

Will sighed and laid down, curling up with the wolf, brushing his hand through thick fur, holding him the way he had wanted that day, with such affection he felt for the wolf, he was glad he came back.

The wolf sighed deeply, and laid his head on Will's chest with closed eyes, like he'd finally made it home after being lost for a month.

"There," Will sighed, closing his eyes, snuggling against the wolf, starting to drift off again, content this time.

The wolf drifted off with Will, happily, sleeping heavily, his nose tucked against Will's neck.

In the morning, Hannibal was lying in the wolf's place, still asleep on Will, and naked. Will was wrapped around Hannibal, his chin over his head, as the sun shone through the window, bleeding in over Will's creamy white skin, making him blink his eyes open. He hummed, holding Hannibal' closer.

Hannibal groaned softly and rolled over Will, sore from head to toe, and cold. He burrowed gracefully under the blankets, and wrapped one arm around Will's shoulders.

Will opened his eyes half way, gazing up at Hannibal and his scruffy, beautifully elegant face. "Hannibal…" he murmured, quietly, not yet aware of the situation, the night before much like a dream.

Hannibal peeled his eyes open. He expected to wake, as he did sometimes, outside, naked and cold, but well hidden. Instead he was in bed with Will, which felt like heaven, comparatively. He kissed Will's jaw, then his lips, unable to taste blood lingering on his teeth this time. No one had died…

"When did you get back?" Will asked, still in a sleepy haze, kissing Hannibal back slowly.

"Not long ago, before dawn. I didn't wake you?" Hannibal whispered, and curled around Will under the covers. "The door was open… I was worried."

Will rubbed his bandaged feet against the bed and then Hannibal's legs, reality slowly seeping back into place at the tinge of pain. "Was it?" Will felt around him, on the bed, for any sign of the wolf...

"Open and swinging in the wind. I thought perhaps you were awake," he murmured, and snuggled Will closer to his chest.

A dozen things went through his mind at once, and Will wondered if when Hannibal returned, the wolf bolted. Or… *or* … "You didn't see the wolf?"

"I did not see any wolf," Hannibal said, honestly. "Did he return? You left the door open hoping he would visit?"

"He was here… I," Will sighed, not sure how much he wanted to tell Hannibal, and shook his head. "Yeah. I… thought I saw him."

“Then you know he’s well, and he remembers you. He’ll be back again, I’m sure,” Hannibal whispered, and kissed Will’s cheek, then his jaw.

“Probably not until the next full moon,” Will sighed, and smiled meekly up at Hannibal. “You’re naked.”

“Do you object to my undressed state?” Hannibal asked with a slow smirk. He was sore, of course, his bones and muscles aching, stomach snarling at the meal of steaming flesh he didn’t get last night … but it was all worth it.

“No, not at all,” Will said, though still put off, perhaps, that Hannibal had left, but he wasn’t going to make the man feel bad for him, and the state he’d ended up in. Will pushed Hannibal over, kissed him once, and crawled out of bed, to the bathroom, to take a leak and check on the bandages, door closed.

Hannibal watched Will, and then laid down again to let his aching body relax for a moment. He was always exhausted, the morning after, and usually tried to do as little as possible to allow himself to recuperate. It was going to be a challenge with Will here, but he wanted to be around Will so desperately, that he was willing to find a way.

Will changed bandages and put on socks and then got dressed. He walked out slowly to the kitchen to make breakfast, starved himself. “Eggs?” he quirked a brow, half suspicious of Hannibal, half disappointed the wolf was gone, yet again.

Will’s mind wanted to make those leaps, to connect the two, but Will still wasn't sure he'd trust his judgement, or that of a fantasy driven worlds.

Hannibal opened his eyes slowly, unaware that he had closed them again, and sat up. “Are you offering or requesting?” he asked, pushing himself into sitting up.

“Offering,” Will said with a slightly soured look that he would ask Hannibal *make* him breakfast after being out all night.

“That would be lovely, thank you, Will,” Hannibal said from the bed, unusually reluctant to move this morning.

Will go the frying pan out from the cabinet storage, and set it on the stove, adding butter and then turning it on. He tugged the carton of fresh eggs from the fridge, gently resting it on the counter. Two plates were procured and set to transfer food onto in a bit. “Were you able to help your patient?” Will asked as he turned the coffee pot on to perk.

“Yes, thankfully,” Hannibal murmured. To his surprise, Rose jumped on the bed, and laid next to him, her head on his arm. “But it was a long night. Did you sleep well?”

“Yeah,” Will murmured, cracking eggs into a bowl, and then took a fork to beat them gently, adding in salt and pepper as he did, shifting lightly on his feet to keep off the part that hurt more.

Hannibal pet Rose gently, and arched his brows at Will's reply. "I was concerned you might not, after I left."

"I got up once to take my medication. Forgot to before going to bed." Will poured the eggs into the heated pan, slowly. He didn't want Hannibal to feel guilty for leaving, after all, it was part of his job.

Hannibal petted Rose's black and white fur, and thought the lie over. They were both lying, they both had to, he supposed. "I'm glad you rested. I wished I did not have to leave," Hannibal said, sincerely.

If Will were honest and Hannibal were too, then they'd have to look at the cases differently. If it were true. "It is what it is…." Will moved the eggs around the pan, cooking them.

"I have a visitor," Hannibal chuckled, and scratched Rose's neck.

"She's stayed very close all night," Will answered, turning the stove off, he plated the eggs, and turned to put bread in the toaster.

Hannibal was so utterly drained that he fought to keep his eyes open while Rose fell asleep against him, her breath huffing against his bare shoulder. "The full moon, perhaps."

Will sighed and plated the toast and then brought it over to Hannibal, not sure if he was up for eating or not. "Maybe."

Hannibal took the dish with a tired smile, and let their fingers brush. "Thank you, Will. It is not often anyone cooks for me."

"Don't thank me until you've tried it," Will murmured and handed Hannibal a fork to go with it. He then went back to feed the dogs first, and then settled in next to Hannibal quietly with his own plate.

"It smells divine," Hannibal murmured gratefully, and tasted a forkful of the fluffy, simple, but pleasing eggs Will made. "Thank you."

Will nodded and forked his own into his mouth, and then some of the toast, not yet sure what would settle on his stomach, but since the stew had he was sure this would be fine. "It's not much."

"It's more than enough," Hannibal said with a soft smile. He couldn't imagine thinking two months ago that he might be able to have breakfast with the most fascinating man he'd ever met the morning after a full moon. Even if Will did not know the entire truth, his simple companionship was astounding.

Will scarfed down his food and then stood again to get a cup of coffee. "Sugar or cream? Both?"

"Both, today, please," Hannibal sighed, feeling a little less ragged with every bite he took of the eggs. He desperately needed protein he didn't have last night.

Will made Hannibal a cup of coffee and then handed it to him, leaned over him gently, and then sat down with his own in hand, tucking socked, bandaged feet under him.

“Thank you,” Hannibal said with a worn smile in his eyes when Will handed him the cup of coffee. He moved closer, and leaned against Will gently as he sipped the coffee. Like the eggs, it was plain, but Hannibal could tell Will had prepared it with care. “I meant to eat last night, but there was simply no time.”

“We had eaten between lunch and dinner,” Will commented, though he was sure Hannibal needed more routine then Will did on eating habits. He sipped his coffee slowly, trying to feel Hannibal out from here, letting himself be open.

Hannibal longed to tell Will the truth, that he’d been with him all night, that he had found him sleepwalking, and guided him home … but that would force Will into a choice: Hannibal, or Jack. Hannibal was not sure how Will would choose, just yet. It was too much of a risk, sadly, and he knew he had to be careful. “My appetite is demanding, almost a thing unto itself…”

“Still hungry?” Will asked, just in case, happy to get Hannibal anything else from the fridge if he needed it. Will wanted honesty, but he knew the rules of these games, and if Hannibal were a killing wolf, a -- *werewolf*-- then he’d have to hide what he knew from Jack Crawford.

“I can wait until lunch for a little more,” Hannibal said as he sipped his coffee, and laid his throbbing head on Will’s shoulder with a close of his eyes. Hannibal took Will’s hand in his own, and held it, silently. “Thank you, Will.”

Will hummed as he sipped coffee and then gently laid his head to rest over Hannibal’s, still quite worn out himself. “No need to thank me.”

“It is in the quiet moments like this that I find you’ve made the most startling change in my life,” Hannibal admitted, with a sigh. “I enjoy being alone with you, together.”

“Startling?” Will smiled a little at that, and set his coffee down. Though he was dressed and Hannibal was still naked, Will wrapped his arms around him.

“I’ve been essentially alone for a very long time. Before we met, I would have rested my aches and fatigues away in a large, but empty bed, and woke to an empty house. I prefer having your company, even on the most difficult and frustrating of nights.”

Will gazed at the fireplace ahead of them as Hannibal spoke, shifting his jaw, wondering when he should say what he wanted to say, what he needed to say. “Why?”

“For the same reason I prefer to be in a room with beautiful music than in a room without it,” Hannibal replied, and stroked his hand over Will’s chest, silent for a moment. “Now that I have experienced life with you, the thought of life without you is … dull, flat, and pale.”

“You say that now,” Will sighed, sure that at some point he’d be looked over by Hannibal, forgotten.

Hannibal turned his head to look up at Will, a little shocked at the cynicism in Will's voice. Will was a cynic, that was true, but he assumed Will understood the way Hannibal felt, even at it's most basic, human level. "You imagine that will change?"

"My own father doesn't even like me enough to want me around," Will whispered, reaching for his mug again and taking a sip of his coffee. "Why would anyone else be different?"

"Do you imagine I won you over with all of my efforts, just to cast you aside?" Hannibal asked, a little hurt in his eyes. "I assure you, I don't drive hours and hours in the early morning to bring everyone who doesn't like me breakfast the next day…"

"You brought me breakfast before I liked you," Will pointed out. He swallowed, chest feeling hollow. "I haven't ever had anyone stay…"

"I haven't ever taken care of anyone's dogs," Hannibal said, softly. "Nor would I ever have offered to do it personally. At the very most, I would have recommended a service," Hannibal pointed out.

Will hummed; "So, why have you been lying to me?" Out in the open was best, right? Will swallowed again, wondering if this was a mistake.

Hannibal went very still, and their eyes locked. He was silent for a long moment, analyzing Will with an unblinking stare. "The only reason I would ever lie to you is to protect you, Will. Some lies are necessary for the greater good, for the peace of mind of those we love."

"Okay," Will whispered, not pushing it. There was no point if Hannibal was not going to be honest.

Hannibal shifted closer to Will, their noses nearly touching, and locked eyes with him. "Are you afraid of me, Will?"

"No," Will whispered, looking Hannibal in the eye, "should I be?"

"Any rational man would say yes," Hannibal whispered, his heart beating hard with hope and twisting at the same time.

"I think we both know I'm hardly rational." Will swallowed once again and then stared at Hannibal. "I've never been afraid of you."

"No," Hannibal whispered back, "you haven't." Hannibal looked calm on the surface, but his blood was pumping wildly underneath his smooth exterior. His dark eyes were conflicted, filled with depths of emotion, with calculations of how Will would react that he had rehearsed over and over, able to see every possible outcome with crystal clarity … save for one. That outcome was too bright to look at, directly, like the sun.

Hannibal raised his hand to Will's cheek, and stroked the line of his jaw. "Why did you lie to me?"

"I didn't want you to feel responsible for my sleep walking. You left me after just returning home, in a state I shouldn't be trusted in… but if you couldn't help it, why make you feel

bad?" Will whispered back, breath shaking.

"I didn't want to leave you, Will," Hannibal whispered, back, and cupped the back of Will's neck, holding him close as their foreheads touched. "I came back as soon as I could … and there I found you, following the path my car had taken before I turned off of the road, and hid it in the brambles and trees," Hannibal whispered, gently, the air between them thick.

Will's breathing heightened as he realized the truth, the very thing he already knew, of course, but Hannibal was admitted it, fully. "I… *needed* you…"

"And I was there," Hannibal whispered, his own voice starting to tremble now as he realized there was no turning back from this, no taking back the secret. "I took you home."

Will wrapped his arms around Hannibal's thick shoulders and kept him close. "You did. You could have eaten me."

"I was starving," Hannibal whispered with a soft, breathless laugh at the sheer relief of no longer dancing around the truth. "But I cannot eat you, and have you," he said, with wet eyes, and cupped Will's face with both hands, their faces still close.

Will realized that Hannibal could have lead him to believe all sorts of things in his fevered state, but he didn't. He had misled him to believe the murders were someone else. Could Will blame him? The wolf would have no control over his kills, though thought out, it was in his nature. "Why didn't you eat me the first time?"

Hannibal took a deep breath and gazed at Will for a moment, softly, almost brokenly as he considered what he would have to tell Will to answer him. No more lies. "There is no reliable source of information about the particulars of being what I am. We are rare, in the world, and we do not speak of what we are. Lycanthropes do react to silver, as you found with the base of that antique lamp, we undergo transformation under the full moon, our appetites are ravenous. These are fragments of a difficult reality that have made it's way to the public eye. Most of what one hears about lycanthropes is conjecture, superstition, and myth. I have found it safest to rely on my own experience, nothing else."

He swallowed hard, and then licked his lips as he looked at Will. "There is a myth that circulates among the communities obsessed with the occult, among those convinced werewolves are real, that lycanthropes, like typical wolves, bond for life. That bond is sacred, unbreakable, and renders the beloved of the wolf safe from attack, safe from all harm. I had dismissed these claims as romantic storytelling years ago, until I met you."

"Until the wolf you saw me?" Will asked, listening, intently. The story Hannibal mentioned a month ago about the man and the wolves…

"Yes. My memories of what I do as a wolf are usually fragmented and incomplete at best. I do, however, remember meeting you as though it had been filmed in the highest resolution possible, and stored in my mind for posterity. I remember all of last night, well, every second that I was with you," Hannibal murmured, quite aware that this made him vulnerable, in more ways than one. He had handed Will a weapon with which he could kill him in an instant, and hoped he would not.

“You didn’t kill anyone,” Will pointed out, no phone calls this morning, nothing from Jack about another one. Will scooted down and wrapped himself around Hannibal.

“I did not, and my stomach regrets that this morning,” Hannibal sighed, then hugged Will tightly, relieved that he did not have to feign mere fatigue this morning. He melted into Will’s embrace, and pressed his sensitive nose against Will’s curls.

Their bond grew in that moment, and Will knew he’d do anything to protect Hannibal, even with his sense of justice, Hannibal was not above that. “Now what?”

“I believe that is the question you must ask yourself, Will,” Hannibal whispered, and swallowed hard, still holding on to him with both aching arms. “You are aware of what I’ve done, of what I am. Can you accept it?”

“I think I accepted it the second I met you,” Will said, referring to Hannibal as the wolf. His moral compass was changing, not just what he believed and his values, but what he would do for Hannibal. The law was set in motion for humans, not animals. A darkness that wavered in Will for years started to even out, jolting even to another plane altogether

.Hannibal’s back sank with a large, relieved sigh, and he squeezed Will with his arms as much as he could before he nuzzled Will’s face, and kissed his lips, shaking a little. All he had longed for, deep down, was someone who could understand him fully, and then after that understanding was achieved, accept him.

Will held Hannibal’s face with both hands and kissed him softly, and then more deeply, showing him rather than telling him that he was not going anywhere.

Hannibal’s racing heart slowed down when Will kissed him back, then felt like it was going to burst with joy. A tear streaked down Hannibal’s high cheekbone, and Hannibal tilted his head to lock their lips together as he cupped the back of Will’s head with one shaky hand.

Will could not see a world without Hannibal, as though a piece of him had been unlocked when meeting the man and the wolf, a piece of himself he’d never known well enough, but with Hannibal, he knew himself the best. There’d be no replacing, nor wanting to. Will hummed against Hannibal’s mouth, wrapping long legs around his hips, jean clad to naked ones.

Hannibal rolled his hips against Will, and pressed them chest to chest as they kissed. He wound their tongues together, and rolled onto his back, cherishing the weight of Will’s warm body over his own.

There was no denying their connection, and Will couldn’t say he wanted to, anyway. He straddled Hannibal’s hips, and kissed down into his mouth slowly, and then licked his way down Hannibal neck.

Hannibal groaned at the feeling of Will’s mouth against his neck, and leaned his head back, already breathless. His hands, sore at every joint, pulled at Will’s shirt and yanked it off, over Will’s head. “Beautiful …”

The thermal shirt came off and Will undid his jeans and shimmied them off, in just his boxers now. He palmed down Hannibal's chest slowly, rocking his hips down against Hannibal's. "I dreamed about you…"

"When?" Hannibal asked, between their warm mouths, and groaned at the feeling of Will straining through his boxers. He slipped a palm between them, and rubbed at Will's cock through the thin, well-worn fabric.

"Last night, every night you weren't at the hospital with me. It's always you," Will admitted, softly, and slipped his boxers off, kicking them to the floor, laying over Hannibal. He bent and kissed him again, deeply.

Hannibal groaned, and wrapped his long legs around Will's, tangling them together as they ground together. "I want to be with you, every night," he confessed, breathlessly.

"Every night but full moons?" Will asked between long, drawn out kisses, dizzy from each one.

"Every night but full moons," Hannibal promised, softly, and arched against Will, both hands kneading Will's ass.

Even on full moons Will would try to keep him, get extra meat if he had to, anything to keep Hannibal from killing, if possible. He gazed down at the other man, clearly very in love with the fondness in his eyes. "I adore you…"

"I adore you, too," Hannibal whispered, with passion in his eyes as he stared up at Will, and pulled him into another long kiss. He had been so certain, at times, that Will would not accept him when he knew the truth that he was shaken, deeply, by the feeling of his acceptance.

Will, of course, meant something else, but the word would simply not leave his mouth, not just yet. Instead, he pressed the feeling into Hannibal with his tongue and lips, rolling his hips over the doctor's, both of them hard.

"I want you," Hannibal whispered, then kissed Will back as he slid Will's thighs on either side of his hips, and arched his aching back up, pressing against Will's ass as their tongues tangled.

Will groaned, biting a kiss down into Hannibal's mouth. "I'm yours," he whispered back, rubbing the cleft of his ass down over Hannibal's leaking cock.

Hannibal moaned, able to feel his cock twitching against the muscle of Will's ass. "The bottle … in the nightstand…"

Will leaned up and reached into the nightstand. He grabbed the bottle and slathered his fingers with it, and pressed them into himself, tight all over again, still so sore from the night before as well. "Oh-"

Hannibal gasped, openly, at the sight of Will fingering himself, and took the bottle to coat his cock with the lube. "You are breathtaking…"

Flushing, Will, did his best to coat himself, working himself open all over again, and when he was sure he could take Hannibal's cock again, he positioned himself over his length. "Slow."

"Slow," Hannibal groaned, and cupped his shaking hands against Will's ass, guiding him over his cock, very slowly. His eyes were black with lust as Will sunk down around him, and Hannibal closed his eyes, cursing in Lithuanian.

Finally getting Hannibal in all the way, Will groaned, fingers spread in through his thick chest hair, leveraging himself to roll his hips down and over his cock. "Hannibal-"

Hannibal pressed into Will, slowly, staring at him as it became easier with each stroke to fuse their bodies together. "Will," he gasped, palming Will's chest, hand over his heart.

Sitting back, the brunet started to ride Hannibal with slow rolls of his hips, cock thumping against Hannibal's stomach with each pass, growing faster and faster. Hannibal used one hand to grip Will's cock, stroking it slowly as Will rode him. The air around them became hot, and Hannibal could smell their scents mingling together in the air, adding another layer of sensuality to their writhing, interlocked bodies.

Will had been so afraid that Hannibal had fucked and run, but now that the truth was there and evident, he knew that would never be the case. They were bonded, perfectly connected. Will's fingers pinched Hannibal's peaked nipples, twisting gently.

Hannibal groaned, and started to fuck Will harder, his hips slapping Will's ass, harder and harder as his back arched at the touch to his nipples. "Will-" Hannibal gasped, a little louder, his voice shaking.

Head lolled back, Will ground down with every pass of their hips colliding, taking Hannibal against his prostate, over and over again, building the heat in his core, spreading out fast through his spine. "Hannibal, oh God…" he panted.

Hannibal ignored the ache in his body, and growled, deep in his chest as he gripped Will's thighs and planted his heels into the bed, using the leverage to press himself into Will, slamming into him hard and fast as he started to lose control, coming apart at the seams. "Yes…"

Will was all but thrown, held down and tight over Hannibal by this thighs, the only thing keeping them connected. He started to breathe harder, faster, just like the way he was fucked, gripping into the thick chest hair. His body boiled, pleasure reaching his peak as it was pushed right over the edge.

Hannibal joined Will, his body flexing and pulsing as he buried his cock deep in Will's body, and exploded inside him with a dizzying orgasm. He dug his nails into Will's thighs, and gasped, roughly, gasping for breath like he'd just surfaced from a deep ocean, hands shaking and skin flushed.

Will spilled all over Hannibal's stomach and chest, spurting and coming in droves, riding it out, until finally he slowed. Will all but collapsed on Hannibal, their bond deep enough now that Will knew he need not say a word, just hold and be held.

Hannibal's arms wrapped around Will, softly, and nuzzled Will's cheek as they both caught their breath. They lay like that, wordless and hot for a few minutes before Hannibal kissed Will's lips, softly. "I was afraid you would not wish to see me again."

"I was afraid you'd gotten what you wanted from me and left for good," Will whispered, honestly, against Hannibal's mouth.

Hannibal gave Will an incredulous look, and leaned up to kiss him on the lips. "I do hope that sounds ridiculous to you now," Hannibal whispered, absolutely exhausted now.

"It does," Will sighed, wrapping himself up in Hannibal, content and *happy* for once.

Hannibal managed to wrap his leg around Will's thigh, and sank into the bed with a sigh, and smile. "The day after the transformations, I usually do nothing at all," he chuckled.

"Except for coming to meet consulting professors on murder cases." Will grinned, and kissed Hannibal's neck, happy to just snuggle with him, have a day of rest.

"I was unusually motivated. I even cooked for you," Hannibal pointed out with a soft smile.

"You cook for a lot of people. Alana told me so," Will retorted, not letting Hannibal use that excuse. "Now, *me* cooking for *you* , that is unusual."

"That is unusual," Hannibal whispered, with a warm, tired smile, and kissed Will's lips. "I was merely pointing out that it is unusual for me to so much as venture further than my clawfoot tub two to three days after I transform, let alone cook, and travel to impress someone I could not forget."

"You adore me then," Will said, quietly, and kissed Hannibal's jaw.

"Desperately," Hannibal admitted, and managed to flush a shade darker up his throat and across his chest when he said that. "I have been utterly obsessed with you since the night we met."

"Morning," Will corrected, with a grin. "Had I known you were the wolf…"

"The morning we met," Hannibal whispered back, and tilted his head. "Had you known, what would you have done differently?"

"Maybe not yelled at you, well… about you," Will whispered, almost ashamed now that he looked back. "I'm… not always that horrible." Well, maybe he was, a little.

"You are as you are, and I would not change you for the world. As the wolf, I was allowed to see your soft side before meeting the nettles you present to the rest of the world. Knowing the kindness you were capable of, I loved you more for your defenses."

"You… love me?" Will asked, brows furrowed a little.

Hannibal paused, lips parted, and realized what he had said. It was unlike him to be caught off guard, but he was exhausted, and relieved, and still snuggled in bed with Will, it was easy

to let down every one of his well-crafted walls. A moment's silence followed, and Hannibal looked away from Will before he spoke. "I did not intend to make that clear for some time, but it would be dishonest of me to say I am not very much in love with you."

Will was a slow and steady sort, but he'd been entrapped the moment he set eyes on the wolf, and fall harder for Hannibal. He was not so easy to love and not so easy to love in return. "You don't have to lie. As you said, we're bonded, likely by something bigger than us. I'd be lying if I wasn't honest with you and tell you I was in love with you, too."

Hannibal's tired, golden-brown eyes lit up at the words, and he held his breath as Will spoke, then for a moment after, as though Will had literally knocked the breath out of him. He cupped both sides of Will's scruffy, beautiful face with his hands, and leaned in to kiss him reverently, his heart pounding like he'd just run through the woods on a full moon's night.

Falling more in love in that moment, Will knew he was attached, in ways he had never dreamed he'd ever be able.

Chapter 7

Chapter by beforethedawn, Destinyawakened

Hannibal woke later that day when Will's phone rang on the nightstand. Buster growled at it, and tried to paw it off of the small table. Will reached for it, not to wake Hannibal completely and took it into the other room.

"Graham."

"There was another killing last night, a whole family this time. Are you well enough to come in and take a look?" Jack asked over the phone, without preamble, or a hello.

Will blanched at that and looked over at Hannibal, lowering his tone. "A whole family?" he swallowed. "Yeah, I can come…"

Hannibal arched an eyebrow at that, and tilted his head as he put together what the call must be regarding.

"Good, I'll text you our location. See you soon," Jack said, and hung up, brusque as ever.

"That must have been Jack?" Hannibal guessed with a sigh.

"There's a whole family dead. Killed last night," Will said, subjectively, and slipped on his boots, bending down to tie them up quickly.

"Did Jack mention how?" Hannibal asked, and stood slowly, his joints popping as he got to his feet. He began to dress, moving with effort against burning muscles.

"No, he didn't," Will answered, grabbing his coat. "You don't have to come if you don't want to…"

"I'd like to come. It will seem strange if I do not," Hannibal said. His joints were always swollen and sore for days after a transformation, which made fine motor skills a challenge. He buttoned a shirt he stored in Will's closet carefully, and pulled a tie from the same hiding spot.

Will went over to help Hannibal with his tie. "You are supposed to be my rock," Will agreed.

"Your rock may soak in your tub when we return, if you do not mind," Hannibal said with a soft smile in his eyes, and looked at Will gratefully as Will tied his tie. It was marvelous to have someone understand the truth about his life, Hannibal thought.

"That's fine," Will chuckled and patted down Hannibal's tie to his chest and then kissed the corner of his mouth softly.

Hannibal pulled his trousers on from where they were clipped to the hanger, carefully ironed, of course, and did them up before he added a vest. "All Jack mentioned about the scene was

that it was a family? Strange…"

"Yes, the whole family," Will reiterated, helping Hannibal into his suit jacket and then got his own from the coat rack.

"Thank you," Hannibal said, politely, and did up the four buttons of his vest over his flat stomach, then smoothed it down, and took his long coat, shrugging it on before he added leather gloves. "A home invasion? That would be out of the ordinary…"

"It reminds me of the Marlow case, honestly," Will said, pulling gloves from the pocket of his own coat and then grabbed his keys from the counter.

"Marlow case? I'm not familiar with it," Hannibal said as they headed toward the door together. He gave Rose's head a scratch on the way by.

"It's a case I consulted on before being contacted by Jack. The whole family was killed. Murdered, gunned down. Didn't figure out who had done it yet," Will explained, locking up the house on the way out. "Could be related."

"Gunned down … a far cry from the killings we've examined before," Hannibal said as he offered Will the keys to his car, eager to rest rather than drive, for once.

"Yes, but Jack didn't say which sort of killing it was," Will sighed and took Hannibal's keys to his fancy car and unlocked it. He got in and stared at all the fancy knobs before starting it up and pulling out.

Hannibal sat in the passenger seat for the first time, and let Will manage the high-end sedan as they headed out of wolf trap. "I suppose we shall see when we arrive…"

"Just a bit outside of town, not far from here, actually," Will said, not wanting to think it would be a wolf attack, and if it were, it couldn't have been Hannibal…

Hannibal nodded, and rested his hand against Will's thigh, warm and heavy. "Wake me when we arrive, if you don't mind," he sighed.

"I don't," Will said and drove on into the setting sun, evening approaching.

When they arrived, the sun had set completely and Will crawled out of the car and walked around to Hannibal's side to wake him. "We're here."

Hannibal opened his eyes slowly, and nodded, then squeezed Will's hand softly to thank him as he climbed out of the car, and smoothed down his coat, then shut the door, and walked with Will toward the crime scene.

If there had been a family in the crime scene once, it was only easy to tell due to the sheer volume of blood that drenched the ground. "Looks like a family was out here, watching meteors," Jack sighed. "We found a book on astronomy for kids by their car…"

It wasn't even at a house, just in open space, completely alone. Will gaped at the scene and then closed his mouth, afraid of the words that might come out. He stuck very close to

Hannibal, as he looked the scene over, not even sure where to start, honestly. One thing was certain, however.

“It’s… not the same killer.”

“You’re already sure?” Jack asked, standing behind Will, watching him watch the crime scene as Hannibal stood at his side, silent, and dark-eyed at the carnage.

Fragments of limbs of varying sizes littered the ground, but only fragments. The car was smeared with blood and the metal was torn by what had to have been claws and teeth. It was a brutal scene, no whole bodies left … which was almost a mercy.

“The pattern is different from the others, Jack. The others were…” Will shook his head, squatting down as he put on examination gloves to get a better look, “precise. This is erratic. Not planned at all.”

Hannibal pursed his lips when he noticed a girl’s doll thrown in the bush, with a small, bloody handprint on it. “This was an indiscriminate slaughter, blood for the sake of blood…”

“Hunger, even. No forethought,” Will agreed, “They were here, it was good enough.”

“The other murders were … premeditated?” Jack asked, and grimaced at the gory scene. “This was random? It could have been anyone here, and he would have done this? What makes you think we have two killers who work like this? What are the odds of that? What if our killer just had a bad night? Went off?”

"Why break pattern now?” Will asked, standing again, and walking around to another part, looking at what he assumed to be a pile of bones, but those too were broken to pieces, gnawed on. “Our other murders were carefully selected. This was a case of wrong place at the wrong time, and it’s far from… elegant.”

Hannibal watched Will closely, focusing on him as Will looked at the carnage around him.

Bev walked by, snapping photos with a frown. “I’m telling you, werewolves. It’s werewolves…”

Will looked back at Hannibal, and then at Beverly, brow furrowed slightly. “Plural now?”

“Well, you said it’s not the same one!” Bev noted, snapping more photos as Zeller rolled his eyes in the background.

“Yeah, and Dracula is in questioning with Mothra for a scene downtown,” he muttered.

Will’s eyes scanned the scene, ignoring the two completely. He stood back into a quieter spot, eyes sliding shut as the pendulum swung behind his eyes and everything reversed.

A happy family seen from a colorless view, laughing and enjoying themselves as a little girl was explained to by her father was a meteor could do, and how to spot one.

“I want to eat the youngest last, but I know it will scream the most, so I go for her first, snapping me jaws at her throat, shaking her about until she is lifeless. No time to eat yet, I attack the wailing mother, tear her to shreds… the father is attacking me, shouting, he turn and snarl, baring my sharp teeth and he and the son run. I run after them, faster…. I only catch up to the father. The boy has hidden and I am hungry.”

Will snapped out of it, looking around again. “Their son, he got away… he, he could be out there still!” Will started for the woods, grabbing a flashlight off a passing cop.

Hannibal followed as Jack and the others just blinked in confusion. “Son?” Jack echoed, then turned to beller at the agents collecting evidence. “EVERYONE START SEARCHING. WE HAVE A POSSIBLE SURVIVOR HIDING IN THE BRUSH.”

Hannibal kept up with Will, senses alert as they headed into the woods. “There’s something this way,” Hannibal said, pointing down a narrow, mostly hidden path.

Will hadn't been sure, but from what he saw and deduced, it looked as though there were foot prints. How the kid got away from the wolf, he wouldn't know until they found him. Will followed the way Hannibal gestured.

Hannibal stepped carefully through the brush, and pointed to a scrap of fabric on a jagged branch. He could smell fear, thick and strong, and followed it to the edge of a pond. “There,” he whispered, and pointed to a little cluster of fallen branches put together like a hiding place.

Will ran down the slope to the pond, and carefully started to pull away the brush. “Hello?” he said quietly, “I'm Will…”

The little boy was shivering hard, and blood spattered. His blond hair was a mess, and big dark eyes looked up at Will as he scrambled back, away from Will.

Hannibal crouched, and looked at the boy. “We are here to help you, we know what happened. You’re safe, the monster is gone.”

The boy, all of ten, maybe, stared at them both with big dark eyes, and curled in on himself a little more. Will glanced back at Hannibal and then offered his hand out to the boy. “Please, we just want to help. We have the police…”

“We’ll help you get warm, and some food,” Hannibal assured the boy, with a little smile. The boy looked at Will, and started to crawl out, toward him, shaking and pale.

Will put the end of the flash light in his mouth and opened his arms for the boy, and curled him up into his arms, muddy and worn, Will didn’t care. “It’s okay, we’ve got you.”

Hannibal removed his coat, and wrapped it around the boy like a blanket. “We should get him back, and let the others know he’s found,” Hannibal said, looking at how pale and cold the boy was, likely a little hypothermic.

Will nodded and stood slowly, holding onto the shivering, cold boy tightly, letting him share his warmth. The boy, though older, laid his head on Will’s shoulder, sobbing a little. “Let’s

go. We'll get you warm."

Hannibal led the way, and held branches out of Will's way as they walked back to the crime scene, but led them back to his car, away from the carnage. "Let's sit in the car, shall we? What's your name?"

Will managed to get the car door opened and gently set the boy inside, and then jogged around to start it up while Hannibal talked to him. Unfortunately the boy was silent, even still.

"You've been through something very frightening," Hannibal said, softly, "but you have been very brave, you did the right thing to hide," Hannibal said, praising the boy as Jack noticed, and ran over.

"You found him!?" Jack called out.

"Yes, he was hiding down by the water, in the brush," Will said, blocking Jack from the boy, since he knew he could very gruff and rough around the edges. "He's not speaking."

Jack frowned, and looked back in the direction of the crime scene. Hannibal stepped closer to Jack, "He needs medical attention, he's in shock and hypothermic."

The doctor's opinion seemed to sway Jack, and he nodded. "Then we'll take him to the closest center, maybe after he warms up he'll talk."

"Should we take him?" Will asked, looking from Jack to Hannibal. "I'd hate to make him go with more people he doesn't trust or know."

"He's already comfortable in my car, if you'll drive, I can look him over." Hannibal suggested, and gave the boy a reassuring smile.

Will nodded, so long as Jack was okay with it. "You could follow us," Will offered, the car already started up, warming the boy inside.

"I will," Jack promised, and headed to his car while Will and Hannibal climbed into their car with the boy.

Will got in and looked back at the two of them, "Buckled in?" he asked toward Hannibal more than the boy, but looked at the young child when he said it.

Hannibal very carefully wrapped a seatbelt around the boy, who sat stock still, staring ahead with blank eyes. "Yes, we are buckled in, and ready to go."

Nodding, Will started down the road, Jack following with cop cars behind them. Ten minutes later they were at the hospital, and Will was getting out to help the boy and Hannibal.

Hannibal lifted the nameless boy out of the back seat, and held him to his chest as they walked into the emergency room, where he spoke to the nurse in charge while they rushed to take the boy's vitals while Hannibal sat with him in a chair at the triage station. "We will have you warm and dry in no time, and we'll give you some food if you're hungry," Hannibal

promised, doing his best to keep the boy's focus on comfort, and simple promises that were easy to fulfil.

The boy was favoring one side, reluctant to let anyone touch his ankle, covered with his tattered jeans. Will kept watch as Jack had everyone stay back.

"They want a name for your bracelet," Will said, softly, to the boy.

"My name is Hannibal, this is Will," Hannibal said to the boy, quietly, and with a little smile in his eyes. "Will is with the FBI, and I am … Will's assistant. I'm a doctor."

The dark eyes boy watched them both curiously and then nodded his head. "Simon."

"Thank you, Simon. Are you able to tell us what happened?" Will asked, quietly, as the nurses took his name down.

Simon shook his head, and looked away as one of the nurses gestured for Simon to come along to a treatment room. Hannibal picked him up, again, carefully, and carried him in his arms to the room, then set him on the cot in the quiet, private area. "No," he finally whispered, in response to Will, completely overwhelmed.

"Simon, do you mind if we get you out of the wet clothes and into some pajamas?" Hannibal asked, pointing to a rack of children's hospital pajamas.

Simon's were tattered and worn, wet and muddy. Will soothed a hand down the back of his head and the boy nodded. Will was given a set by a nurse and handed them to Simon. "You can change alone if you'd like, we'll turn around…"

Will already felt protective of the boy, some sort of bond forming just as it had with Hannibal, but much, much different.

Hannibal moved a folding screen in front of Simon's bed, and smiled at him before he and Will turned away.

Simon waited until they were turned away, and changed slowly, putting his dirty, torn clothes in a pile before he pulled the dry pajamas on, and did them up. "Okay…"

Will raised his brows over at Hannibal and then when the boy was ready, they moved the screen back. "Better?"

Simon nodded quietly, and climbed back onto the bed as Hannibal walked around to the other side of the screen, gloves on. "Now that you're dry and warmer, let's have a look at your leg," Hannibal said, gently, and looked at Simon's ankle when he put it on the bed. He rolled the cuff of Simon's pants up, slowly, and looked at Will when he saw a deep bite.

"You managed to get away, that's quite something," he said with a little smile. "Does that hurt?"

Simon nodded.

Having no idea what it meant, to be bitten, likely by another werewolf, Will merely shifted his jaw as Jack barged in. Will took a few steps back to let Hannibal continue to examine the boy. “His name is Simon, that’s all we’ve got so far.”

“Okay,” Jack sighed, watching as Hannibal examined the swollen ankle, and began to rinse it with a bottle of saline, a metal dish under it.

“If you don’t mind, Jack, we will call you in when we’re ready,” Hannibal said, politely, but firmly. “Simon, this is Mr. Crawford, he’ll ask you a few questions about what you’ve seen … later.”

Jack sighed, and nodded, able to see the boy needed help. “Call me when you’re ready,” Jack muttered to Will.

“Did you need me at the scene anymore?” Will asked, wanting to be sure. “Or do you have what you need?”

“I think we have what we need,” Jack sighed, and shook his head in dismay. “You’re still sure this isn’t the same guy from before?”

“It was a wolf,” Simon whispered, his eyes large.

“Yes, this does look like a wolf bite, how frightening,” Hannibal agreed. “Do you remember what color it was?”

Simon looked at Will, focusing on him as he twisted his fingers together. “Black. It was all black, and … big.”

Will gave Jack a look, as if to dare him to tell the boy he was wrong. “A big black wolf. No one else?” He held the boy’s eye contact, wanting him to be completely honest so Jack could see it.

“No, no, just the wolf,” Simon whispered, shivering a little. Hannibal pulled a warmed blanket from the heater and wrapped it around Simon’s shoulders.

“There was no human there? No one telling this wolf what to do?” Jack asked, making an effort to be gentle.

The boy shook his head, and looked down at his scratched hands. “We thought it was a dog and then it started biting…” His voice came out reed thin.

Will looked over at Jack once more. “Not human. Just a rabid wolf.” he turned to Simon. “Thank you, that’s all Agent Crawford needed to know.”

Jack sighed, and let himself out, closing the door behind him with a look at Will. Hannibal focused on the boy’s ankle, and began to look through the cupboards. No sense in making him wait, after all. “How do you feel, Simon? Sick to your stomach? Hot?”

“Kinda sick,” Simon whispered, and looked up at Will. “Are you going to catch the wolf?”

“We’re going to try,” Will said, honestly to the boy, watching Hannibal look around, not sure how serious this actually could end up being. He’d have hell to pay with Jack later.

Hannibal brought a few things from the cupboard, and loaded a needle with lidocaine. He was a medical doctor, if they waited to be seen, Simon could be in pain for hours. “Just a little poke here, Simon. Hold Will’s hand if you would like,” Hannibal said.

Simon nodded, and held out his hand for Will’s.

Will smiled softly at the boy and reached his hand out, letting the smaller one rest against his palm, tightly. “It’ll make you feel better.”

The boy held Will’s hand as Hannibal injected numbing around the swollen, bloody bite mark, and Simon relaxed as the pain ebbed. “Can’t feel it now.”

“Good, hopefully it will heal up enough it won’t be too bad,” Will said, stroking his hand down the back of the boy’s head softly, and sat down next to him on the bed.

“We’ll have to give you some pills so that it does not get infected, and you may need a few more needles to prevent Rabies, but I will clean it out now that it is numb and put some stitches in the holes,” Hannibal explained as he began to work, inspecting the wounds. They were large, larger than bite marks from any normal dog, and ragged from the way the wolf’s teeth tore at the boy’s skin as he escaped him.

“I like dogs … usually,” Simon said, very quietly, and chewed his lower lip.

“Me too,” Will said, soothingly. “I have six of them. All very nice, they don’t bite.” He was offering, of course, to take the boy to see them at some point, given custody would allow him.

“I have a little dog,” Simon said, and stared at Will’s hand on the bed, then his watch.

“Did your little dog come with you to see the stars?” Hannibal asked, softly. Simon shook his head no.

“No, he’s at home. Someone should feed him…” Simon said, still obviously in shock at the thought of the house being empty, no one living in it anymore.

Will’s heart ached at that, and he squeezed the boy’s hand. “I’ll go. I promise. I’ll take some of my food to him and feed. Maybe take him to my house, so he’s not lonely, would that be okay?”

“Are your dogs nice to little dogs?” Simon asked, with a little squeeze of his hand as Hannibal irrigated the wound with syringes of saline, and began to stitch.

“Yes. I have a few little ones myself,” Will replied with a genuine smile, and stroked down Simon’s head. “He’ll be very safe.”

“Okay,” Simon agreed, and leaned against the comforting touch as Hannibal repaired Simon’s foot.

“I think he’ll be very happy to see you, what sort of a dog is he?” Hannibal asked, without looking up from his task.

“A pug. His name is Doug. It rhymes,” Simon said, managing a tiny smile.

“That’s cute, did you name him?” Will asked, chuckling a little at the name. He liked pugs, they were so… ugly but so adorable.

“Yeah,” Simon nodded, “Doug is light brown. He just … looked like Doug.” Simon explained with a spread of his hands, then looked at them again, the spatter on his skin. He looked like an old man in a child’s body.

Will put his hands over Simon’s. “I’m sure Doug is great. You’ll see him again, soon.” Will believed that, and already had plans to call child services to be sure he was able to do what he could to help.

“I can write down my address, if you want. There’s a key under a rock by the door,” Simon offered, worry gripping him suddenly about his only family member as Hannibal bandaged his foot.

“That would be great,” Will said and got out his phone, opening up the note pad so Simon could type it in. “Easier this way. I won’t lose it.”

Simon typed in his address, and a little description of where to find the key, then handed it to Will. “Doug’s food is in a big red bag in a cupboard under the sink. His bowl is by the kitchen table,” he said, and realized he couldn’t go home … maybe not ever. “Can you bring him here?” Simon asked, with a sudden waver to his voice.

Will nodded, and saved the information on his phone, and then pocketed it. “I sure can. Do you need anything else?” the boy as unusually calm now for someone who had witnessed his families’ death.

The boy was still in shock, almost sure that his family would be at home, with the dog. “No …” he said, as Hannibal bandaged Simon’s ankle with some gauze, carefully.

“Your own clothes? A stuffed animal? Toy?” Will asked, carefully, knowing it was delicate.

Simon seemed to shut down again at the thought of home, and just nodded, staring at the scratches on his palms.

Will put his arm around the boy and hugged him to his chest. “I'll get Doug and pick up some hot chocolate, how's that sound?”

Simon swallowed hard, and then felt his throat close up as he started to cry against Will’s chest. Hannibal sighed, and reached over to rub Simon’s back with his hand, slowly, well-acquainted with this sort of heartache.

Will said nothing else as he scooted up onto the bed and pulled Simon into his lap and held him. His empathy made it difficult *not* to feel for the boy, and let him cry, stroking the back of his head with one hand.

Simon seemed to realize, fully, that his family was gone forever, and they'd all died in pain, and terrified. He hugged Will hard and buried his face against Will's shoulder, tears wetting the fabric of his shirt. Will held tighter, his head over Simon's, chin resting there as he looked at Hannibal, his own eyes rimmed red as he swallowed down the pain he obviously felt rolling off the boy.

Hannibal rested his hand on Will's back, and his other on Simon's back, comforting them. "You will always miss them, you will always remember them, but this sharp pain will fade, with time," he said to Simon, softly. "In the meantime, it is alright to cry."

Simon nodded, and kept hugging Will with his thin arms, catching his breath.

They stayed like that for a long time, until Simon fell asleep. "I should go get Doug so he's here when Simon wakes up," he whispered to Hannibal.

Hannibal nodded, and sat on the bed to extend his arms so that Will could move Simon to him. "I'll keep him company until you return with the dog," Hannibal promised.

Will shuffled Simon and crawled off the bed. He leaned over to Hannibal and kissed his lips, chastely. "I'll be back soon."

Hannibal nodded, and smiled softly at Will. "I think having his dog will help."

Will nodded and left the room, grabbing his coat.

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Returning a few hours later, the night had fallen on them completely, dark out, and a fresh patch of snow had laid out for spring, which Will found amusing. He had the dog under one arm when he entered the hospital room again. He set down a bag he'd put together for the dogs, including dishes and food.

Hannibal was still holding Simon, but in an arm chair next to the bed. Hannibal was asleep, too, arms around the boy, both of them passed out. Will smiled at that and set the bag down and then put the pug on the bed, who barked once, and Will gave him a pet.

Simon opened his eyes slowly, and smiled when he saw the dog. "Doug! Hi, boy!" he said, and held out his arms.

Hannibal opened his eyes, watching quietly, then carried the injured boy to the bed to let him pet his only remaining family member. "We were seen by a doctor while you were out. Simon's had his shots to guard against rabies, we're waiting for the results of his blood tests."

"Are we worried about the results?" Will asked, setting up the bowl with a little food and one with water, and then looked over at Simon as he pet Doug and hugged him.

"Standard procedure," Hannibal said, and watched Doug lick Simon's face and grunt, happily.

"Was he hungry?" Simon asked, looking up at Will as he hugged his dog.

“Very hungry, I fed him first before hand and gave him a bath, so he’s nice and clean, and well bathroomed,” Will chuckled, and sat down on the edge of the bed as Doug wagged his little tail.

“Good boy, Doug,” Simon said, and kissed the top of Doug’s head, which made Doug wiggle his entire, stubby body. “Can he stay here with me?” Simon asked Will, hopefully.

“Yeah, of course. He’ll go wherever you go.” Wil had put in some calls to the city to see about being put down as one of Simon’s legal guardians, seeing as the boy would need one, and didn’t trust just anyone else.

“They have been unable to find relatives,” Hannibal informed Will, and watched Doug with some morbid interest. “What sort of dog is this?”

“Pug,” Will said, standing again to be at Hannibal’s side, to talk to him quietly. “I put in a few calls, voicemails, about custody.”

Hannibal set Simon on the bed and stepped away.

“Would they allow you to be his guardian?” Hannibal whispered.

“I don't know. I'm asking either way. I'm not sick anymore …” Will knew he'd be a better father than his own had been, that much was for sure.

“I would clear you as fit in an instant,” Hannibal agreed. “I think, considering the situation, it’s vital we stay close to Simon.”

“Is there… a chance he’s…?” Will gestured to Hannibal, leaning in closer, very aware the situation could be dangerous for himself, as well.

“Yes, a very good chance,” Hannibal whispered while Simon was distracted with the dog. “If that is the case, it’s important he is not in the care of the unsuspecting during the next full moon.”

“I’ll have to remove all the silver from the house,” Will sighed, tilting his head to look up at Hannibal, slipping his hand against his waist.

“When will you know if you’re permitted to bring him home?” Hannibal asked, and touched the back of Will’s neck, gently. “Is there any way I can expedite the process?”

“A phone call might help. I won’t know until morning when they get my messages,” Will answered, quietly, and turned to rest his profile against Hannibal’s with a heavy sigh.

Hannibal nodded, softly, and pulled out his phone. “If you’d give me the number, I’ll call at once and offer my opinion as the consulting psychiatrist on the case.”

Will rolled his eyes and moved away to find his phone, lost somewhere in the bag of things he brought with Doug. He fished out his phone and found the number, handing it to Hannibal to use. “Here.”

Hannibal nodded, and used his own phone to make the call. He gave Will a very quick kiss on the cheek before he stepped out of the room to give his opinion about Simon's condition, so as not to alarm the boy.

Simon looked up, eyes wide. "Is he gone now?"

"Hannibal? No. He's making a call so that we don't have to be apart from each other," Will stated, and went to sit with Simon. "Did you sleep?"

"Yeah, a little bit," Simon nodded as he petted Doug, who seemed happy to sniff him over, and curl up in Simon's lap. "Thanks for bringing Doug."

"I couldn't let Doug be without you," Will said softly, and stroked a fond hand over Simon's head.

Simon's hair was curly, like Will's, but blond. He watched as Doug leaned up and nudged Will's chest, almost as though to say thank you. "He likes you. Doug only puts his head on people he likes."

"That's good to know. I like him too. Do you think you and Doug would like to come stay with me and my dogs in Wolftrap?" Will asked, just between them, petting Doug.

"Where is Wolftrap?" Simon asked, his eyes going a little big at the mention of wolves after what just happened.

"Virginia. About half an hour from here," Will explained, soothingly. "Lots of land. Safe."

"Any wolfs?" Simon whispered, and held on to Doug tightly.

"There's a few, but they don't bother me, so I don't bother them," Will explained, the boy reminding him a bit of himself, maybe a little bolder, at that age.

Simon swallowed, and chewed his lower lip as he considered that. "I don't want to go with strangers. As long as there's no bad wolves, okay. Doug is coming too, right?"

"Doug is coming too. No one else will take you, I promise." Will knew he'd have to take time off from work, to get Simon situated and in a school… or maybe home schooled. The cost would not bother him right now.

Simon nodded and smiled when Doug nudged Will again. "What's your last name?"

"Graham," Will replied and went to pour up hot chocolate he brought in a thermos from Simon's house, into a small cup, and handed it to him.

Simon took a deep smell of the hot chocolate, something familiar and calming, and he teared up a little before he took a sip. "Like the cracker?"

"Yeah, like the cracker," Will chuckled, carding his hand through Simon's hair. "It's… going to be okay, you know…"

Simon looked up at Will with big, dark eyes and let out a slow sigh. “It doesn’t seem … real. I feel like it was just a nightmare.”

“It would feel better if it were a nightmare, wouldn’t it?” Will asked, softly, understandingly. He’d never lost a parent this way, or family for that matter, but that didn’t mean he couldn’t understand, in fact he probably empathized better than anyone.

“Then it would be over, and I’d wake up,” Simon whispered, and sipped his hot chocolate again, then kept Doug from licking the cup with his tongue. “He always wants some, but he can’t have any.”

“No, he can’t. Chocolate isn’t good for him, or any dog,” Will said, simply, and reached into his pocket to give Doug a treat from it instead.

“You have treats all the time?” Simon asked, after he wiped his eyes, and petted Doug as the pug crunched the treat, scattering crumbs everywhere.

“Yeah, I keep them for my dogs mostly, but sometimes I see other dogs and want to have something to give,” Will shrugged, clearly a dog person, over a people person.

“I like dogs, I mean … I still like dogs,” Simon said, with a deep breath. “That … wolf wasn’t normal. It wasn’t a dog. Dogs are nice, usually…”

Hannibal knocked softly at the door, and stepped in, pocketing his phone. “I managed to speak with the director of Children's Services. As it turns out, we attended school together at Johns Hopkin’s,” Hannibal said. “She’s agreed wholeheartedly that Simon would do well with someone he’s already bonded to, so long as he is under medical supervision for his injuries, which I am able to provide.”

Will smiled at Simon fondly and then glanced up at Hannibal as he spoke, brows raised in honest, earnest, relief. “Really? That’s… wonderful. He’ll love Wolftrap.”

“I’ll go and see about the lab results myself, and then we can be on our way,” Hannibal said, relieved to see that Simon seemed open to the idea of going with them. The boy had lost everything, he was in a fragile state at the moment. His possible lycanthropy notwithstanding, Hannibal would still have insisted as a psychiatrist that he stay with someone familiar.

“Perfect. I’ll have to make up the guest room,” Will said, knowing he’d never use the room himself, of course. Perfect for Simon.

Hannibal smiled a little, to himself. “Yes, perhaps I can lend a hand with that,” he said, dryly, and looed over his shoulder with an amused look at Will, who only a day ago was bemoaning Hannibal’s readiness to upgrade his home.

Will raised a brow at Hannibal. “You want to redo my bedroom?”

“I think Simon will need a bedroom, and you will also need a bedroom, for privacy’s sake,” Hannibal said, with hidden meaning in his tone. “I could manage to make something decent in half a day…”

“There’s only one bedroom in the house, Hannibal,” Will said, knowingly, and they would just have to make due.

“I imagine your house was built with an attic, was it not? Attics can be surprisingly charming, when given the right aesthetic,” Hannibal reasoned.

Will didn’t mentioned that he’d slept walk out of the attic often, and nodded his head slowly. “Yes. There’s an attic.” He sighed.

“Trust me,” Hannibal smirked and let himself out of the room to get Simon’s lab results so that they could all leave.

While Hannibal did that, Will packed up what little was brought and put it into the bag. “Looks like we’ll be out of here soon, Simon.”

“Do I have to change back into my clothes?” Simon asked, looking at the heap of torn, bloody clothes in the corner. He didn’t want the blood on him again.

“No, you can stay in those. I have some of your clothes from your house in the car,” Will explained, with a small smile. “But we can buy you some new ones later.”

“Okay, thanks. I’ll pay you back later … when I’m old enough to get a job,” Simon said.

Will laughed, helping Simon from the bed. “You don’t have to. You’ve been through enough, you deserve good things.”

“Thanks,” the boy said, with a little smile that made his pale face look more vibrant, still holding Doug in his arms.

Hannibal stepped in and looked between Will and Simon, struck by the little similarities: the paleness of their skin, the way their hair curled. They could be father and son. “Your lab results are all within normal parameters, that means we can leave, if you’re ready. Are you able to walk?”

Simon nodded, and limped a little, but was able to put weight on his ankle, although he moved slowly.

Will put Doug on a leash, and held it in one hand, letting Simon lean against him with his other holding him around his shoulders. The pack was over one arm, seeing how stubborn Will could be, he didn’t ask Hannibal for help.

Hannibal walked over and took the pack from Will, then held the door open for them so that they could make their way to the car. “Would you like me to drive so that you can rest? I slept for a little while,” Hannibal offered as they walked out of the emergency room, toward his parked car.

“We’re only a half hour out. Are you feeling better?” Will asked Hannibal, quietly, mostly between them. Hannibal should have been resting, even still. He dug the keys from his pocket and handed them to the older man.

“Much more awake, but I will sleep well tonight,” Hannibal said, as he took the keys, and opened the back door for Simon and Doug. Simon climbed in, and buckled himself up, then petted Doug, who seemed ready to nap on Simon’s lap.

“Good boy, Doug,” Will said and made sure they were strapped in and then got in himself and buckled up as well.

Simon was still pale, and quiet, but calm. He touched the leather of the seat underneath him, and remembered his father throwing him into the family car to try and save him from the wolf. It bought him time, enough time to escape out of the other side of the car and into the wilderness.

“Simon?” Hannibal asked, looking at him in the rearview mirror as he sat in the driver’s seat, and started the car. “Are you alright?”

Simon nodded, quietly, and hugged his dog.

Will turned his shoulder to look at the boy. “You’ll have a lot more furry friends at my house. They’ll be really helpful to you.”

“How many?” Simon asked, as Hannibal put some relaxing music on, and began to drive. It was so strange, to have no one at all for a few terrifying hours in the cold, covered with blood, afraid the wolf would return … and now to be in a car going somewhere with new friends.

“Well, counting Doug, seven,” Will replied, quietly, sure he’d told the boy, but after all that had happened, Simon needed to hear things again, to feel soothed.

Simon was managing a moment at a time, it was good to hear consistency, good to know what was real and what to expect.

“Many different types of dogs,” Hannibal said with a little smile, still touched by the little ways Simon reminded him of a blond, dark-eyed Will.

“Like what kinds?” Simon asked, curiously, happy to focus his mind on something nice.

“Mostly mutts. Buster is part Jack Russell,” Will said, not sure if Simon would know what that was, but it was good to keep their conversation off anything that might upset him.

“Like the dog from Frasier?” Simon asked, with a tilt of his head.

Will laughed, chuckled, smiling brightly at Simon, lighting up his blue eyes as he did. “Yeah. Like that one.”

“What is Frasier?” Hannibal asked, as they drove into the night, oblivious to the pop culture reference.

“It’s an older TV show,” Will explained, touching Hannibal’s arm. “You might like it, actually.”

“I can’t say I’ve ever watched very much television,” Hannibal noted, and Simon looked out the window.

"My Mom liked it. She had dvds and watched it all the time,” Simon remembered, going numb again, another wave of grief hitting him hard.

“Maybe we can find something to watch together.” Will knew he’d have to go find his television in the shed, as he never used one.

Simon went quiet again, but nodded, then looked down at Doug, and wiped his eyes with his hand. Hannibal pulled out his pocket square, and handed it back to Simon, which he took to dry his face.

Will gave a soft sigh and turned back ahead. It as going to be quite difficult, he as sure of it, to get the kid through this. However, Will was not a failure, nor someone who gave up easily.

In a few minutes, Simon fell asleep again, holding Doug, and Hannibal’s pocket square as he snored, softly. Hannibal watched him in the rear view mirror as he drove, then looked at Will. “He’s already fond of you.”

“I suppose. But he'd have to be fond of someone, better me than someone less caring…” Will whispered, giving Simon another glance.

“You have very similar dispositions, I think,” Hannibal noted, with a little smile over at Will.

“And what is that?” Will asked, not fishing for compliments, but merely wondering what it was that Hannibal saw in him at all.

“You’re both intelligent, sensitive, concerned with the well being of those you love,” Hannibal said softly. “Not to mention adorable.”

Will rolled his eyes at the last bit, the long road back to his house now in sight. “He’s adorable, I’m… *not* .”

"I happen to disagree. It’s the combination of cherubic curls and large eyes,” Hannibal teased.

Making a face, Will looked out the window into the dark skies of nightfall, and folded his arms over his chest. “Sometimes being compared to that isn’t really a good thing, Hannibal.”

“I meant no offense,” Hannibal sighed, and reached over to hold Will’s hand as they drove. Simon kept snoring, quietly, behind them.

Will let his hand be pried from their position and held onto Hannibal’s hand. Everything had changed so quickly in the course of a month. From single and destitute, to taken and parenting. “I know…”

“You must admit, there is a faint resemblance between the two of you,” Hannibal said, proudly.

“Must I?” Will teased softly, looking behind him a moment. The boy did seem as though he might be related, had Will procreated with someone blond and brown eyed. He smiled a little, looking at Hannibal.

“I think anyone would,” Hannibal smiled, enjoying the sound of Simon sleeping, and chatting with Will. It was like a family.

“I think he likes you, too,” Will said, fondly, and then looked back at Hannibal, unable not to see his majestic wolf, now that he finally knew him.

“I think he might fit in quite well,” Hannibal said, softly. “A cub in the wild is much more likely to survive if adopted by a substitute pack after being orphaned.”

Will sighed at the mention of cub, stroking a thumb over Hannibal’s knuckles. “Do you think…?” He has asked before, but how realistic was it?

“There will be signs in the days to follow if he’s been infected,” Hannibal whispered, and stole a glance back at Simon where he slept. The wound will grow unbearably itchy, he’ll feel hunger as he’s never felt before, restlessness, the hair on his head may grow more quickly than usual, and he won’t sleep as much as he used to, or as well, the sensitivity to silver will set in, and his senses will heighten, particularly in the days just before the moon.

“Will he age?” The question burned in Will like a fire that was spreading quickly. He had no idea if Hannibal could age, if he had, or how old he he was currently. All the folklore he knew of werewolves could be false.

“He’ll age, we’re not immortal,” Hannibal assured Will, and squeezed his hand, softly. “You will not be left behind.”

Will breathed in and out, letting himself calm at the thought. He could not see being without either of them, or them without him. Their bond had been made, and he was sure nothing could break it. “No?”

“No. I will grey and wrinkle even sooner than you will,” Hannibal chuckled, and ran his thumb over the bumps of Will’s knuckles, touched that Will was visibly upset at the thought of not being able to age with Hannibal.

Will nodded, leaving it at that. The rest of the drive was quiet, aside from Simon’s snoring. Once they got to Will’s place, he scooped Simon from the backseat.

Hannibal hesitated, and then sighed, and scooped up the strange little pig-dog from the back seat, who snuggled against his coat. He shouldered the bag Will brought from Simon’s house, and followed Will to the porch.

Simon stirred, and opened his eyes, hugging Will more tightly. “Doug?”

“He’s here, Hannibal has him,” Will said, shoulder to the door as he used one hand to unlock the house, and then push it open. He set Simon down on the couch and tucked a blanket around him.

Hannibal set the snorting pug in Simon's lap, and watched as Will's pack crowded around them, wagging at the boy. Buster jumped up on the couch to give Doug a closer going over, and licked Simon's chin. "He approves of you," Hannibal chuckled, "he barked at me, for a very long time."

Simon smiled, sleepily at all the dogs, and held one hand out. "Hi, everybody…"

Rose came over and sniffed at Simon and then Will, sitting at his feet, head canted at the boy, not sure where he'd come from.

"They love kids. They'll never leave your side now," Will explained.

Simon petted the dogs, a big smile on his face for the first time since they met. "I love them," he said, and leaned closer to Rose, who bumped her wet nose against Simon's, then licked Doug's head, like he was a puppy.

"We'll have to get you a big bed because they will want to share with you," Will said, shaking his head. He never let the dogs with him on the bed, but for Simon, well, maybe he'd let them.

Simon laughed as Rose got up on the couch to lay next to him, and Percy sniffed his wrapped ankle, and pawed at it. "Percy, no, that is tender," Hannibal reminded the dog. Percy sat down, and wagged at Hannibal, hoping for a treat.

"What are their names?" Simon asked Will, petting Rosa's head, then Buster's ears, then Doug again, who seemed utterly unphased by his new friends.

"Well, we've got Percy and Rose, Buster and Morrison, Chester and Precious." Will shook his head, he didn't name the last one, some came with their names already.
Hannibal merely arched one eyebrow at Will at the last name, and looked at the little tan colored dog with curly hair and a sweet face. "Precious?"

Simon just petted them all, obviously happy with the furry, bright-eyed distractions from his grief.

"I didn't name her. She was given to a shelter when her owner died. Little old lady," Will explained with a nonchalant shrug.

"I see," Hannibal said as he hung up his coat, and laid his scarf over the collar, neatly. "I'll make a little something for a late dinner, we should all eat," he said, with a little look at Simon who was laying on Rose's hip on the couch, quiet again, his eyes distant.

"Thank you," Will said, and leaned over to muss up Simon's hair gently. "Any preferences?"

Simon shook his head, and closed his eyes when Will petted his hair. He was fluctuating between moments of almost being normal, and then feeling the grief and fear crash into him again, like waves trying to drown him.

“I’ll do my best with something simple,” Hannibal promised as he removed his jacket, and watched Simon and Will with a slight smile, then moved into the kitchen to wash his hands.

Will took off his own jacket and hung it up. “That’ll do fine, thank you, Hannibal.” He went to the fridge to get out the dog food. “Simon, would you like to help me feed the dogs?”

“Okay,” Simon said, and watched Hannibal go into the kitchen, then got up, and moved to Will to whisper. “Is Hannibal your butler?”

Will chuckled. “No, no. Hannibal is my…” he canted his head slightly, thoughtful, “boyfriend. For lack of better term.” Will got the food out. “We’ll take the big dishes by the back door there and set them out and scoop the rest of this into those bowls okay?”

“Oh, okay,” Simon said, accepting it with ease as he limped next to Will, glad to have something to do, something to keep him occupied.

“How’s the ankle?” Will asked, as they carried the container to the door, and Will scooted the bowls out with his foot, holding the door open with his shoulder.

“Sore,” Simon replied, and walked through. Chester stayed close to Simon, protectively. “What do the dogs eat?”

“This is a mixture of ground turkey, carrots, peas, and rice,” Will explained, quietly, letting the door shut, he set the container down and opened the lid. “I made it just the other day. I always do.”

“That’s nice, they get real food, not just kibble,” Simon nodded, and set Doug down, carefully. “I always felt bad for Doug when he ate the same kibble every day.”

“Like people, I think they get bored, don’t you?” Will asked the boy, and started to scoop food into each bowl. “Doug is in for a treat.”

Simon petted Doug’s sides as Doug started to sniff the air and wag, excited. “He’ll get spoiled,” Simon smiled.

“Nothing wrong with that,” Will laughed and set enough in each bowl for all the dogs as they piled out.

“Can humans eat this?” Simon asked, with a curious head tilt as Doug went to his bowl and started to inhale his food like a small, furry, loaf-shaped vacuum.

“Yes. It’s made of the very things we would eat too, which is why I don’t mind feeding it to my dogs,” Will explained, quietly, watching the other dogs wander out to get their food, too.

“That’s nice. Doug likes peanut butter, too,” Simon explained with a look up at Will, for future reference.

“Good to know. I make some great peanut butter treats.” Will stood, letting Simon sit with the dogs, who all seemed to like him a lot, and keep the boy calmer.

Simon petted them all in turn as they ate, bonding with them in the wake of the massive hole left in his psyche from the loss of his family. Bonding was a survival mechanism. None of this felt real, yet, but the dogs around him felt … right. “He’ll like that,” Simon nodded.

Hannibal appeared, watching the little scene for a moment before he spoke. “Dinner is served.”

Will gestured for Simon to follow. “Let’s have a bite real quick, and then you can come back out and watch over them for me, okay?”

“Okay,” Simon said, with a little sigh, and petted Doug again, before he stepped away from him, reluctantly.

In the kitchen, Hannibal had the small table set for three, with elegant simplicity, and already plated, mouth-watering grilled cheese sandwiches, stuffed to the edges. “Brie, bacon and apple grilled cheese sandwiches,” he announced as he poured water into all three glasses on the table.

Simon smelled the air, and his stomach roared, audibly as he climbed into his chair and started eating at once, which made Hannibal give Will a significant look. “I can prepare another if you’re still hungry after that.”

“You can eat as much as you want,” Will assured the little boy, canting his head.

Simon just kept eating, humming that he understood as he seemed to realize that he was absolutely starving, all at once. “Thanks,” he managed, between bites, which made Hannibal smile with amusement as he set his napkin in his lap.

“It will be lovely to cook for someone with such an appetite,” Hannibal chuckled, and took a few bites of his own sandwich, which was packed with flavour, despite its simplicity.

Will watched for a long moment, more than willing to give his own sandwich to the boy. He took half of it and put it on Simon’s plate. “I don’t think I could ever eat enough to satisfy Hannibal’s cooking appetite. Nice to have someone to share the food with now.”

“S’good,” Simon mumbled through his food, then covered his mouth with one hand. “Sorry. Hungry.”

Hannibal just chuckled approvingly, and sipped his own water. “Understandable. You’re a growing boy.”

It was as Will thought it would be, but he wasn’t fearing of what might happen to Simon, he was merely happy enough that they had been able to bring him into a home where he’d be accepted and helped. Will finally took a bite of his own sandwich, humming around it.

“Perhaps we can made a bed for Simon on the couch for tonight? Tomorrow we can convert your spare room into a bedroom,” Hannibal said to Will, enjoying their first meal together.

“That’s fine,” Will said, one hand over his mouth as he chewed, not trying to be rude. “I don’t have a bed up there, I’ll need to go shopping.”

“We’ll find something,” Hannibal said, and watched Simon finish his one and a half sandwiches. “Would you like more?” he asked.

“No, I’m full now,” Simon said, looking a little sleepy now that he was full, exhausted by the long, long day.

“I’ll get some pillows and a blanket,” Will said, not yet finished with his food, he got up from the table, jogging up stairs to find the items in question.

The dogs were done eating and filed back through the kitchen to the living room to settle down for a nap now that they were full. “Very well, something warm,” Hannibal murmured, and stood to take Simon’s plate for him, then poured a glass of milk for him, and opened the bag Will brought from the hospital. He found a pair of pajamas and handed them to Simon. “Would you like to change into those?”

Simon nodded, and wandered off the bathroom, sleepy. He’d been through a lot, and his body was working overtime to heal.
Hannibal rose to brush dog hair off the couch, and closed the curtains over the windows for the night, giving the front room of the house a cozy feeling. He started a fire in the fireplace, and watched the flames, letting them light his amber eyes like cognac.

Will emerged from the stairs once more, pillows and a warm quilt in hand, and set them up on the couch. “Are you staying?” he asked Hannibal with a look over his shoulder.

“If you’d like, yes, I’d like to stay,” Hannibal said as he stood, and helped to tuck the pillows in place on the couch, then smoothed the heavy quilt over the cushions.

“It’s better when you’re here,” Will admitted, fondly, and looked at Hannibal. “ *I’m* … better when you’re here.”

Hannibal’s eyes lit up at that, and he moved closer to Will, then touched his jaw. “It is difficult to imagine improvement in someone already so close to perfection,” he whispered.

Will smoothed his hand up Hannibal’s chest, other arm snaking around his shoulders, resting their foreheads together for an intimate moment. “I know how...surly and unapproachable I was before meeting you. I know it’s not been long, but I feel *changed* .”

“Love has that power,” Hannibal whispered, with his arms around Will’s shoulders, holding him close and nuzzling his face as the fire crackled in the background. “It is transformative.”

“It is,” Will said, having never been in love, he had no idea. He canted his head slightly and kissed Hannibal lightly on the mouth, almost chastely.

Hannibal hummed, softly, and tilted his head in the opposite direction to lock their lips together, softly, but profoundly, perfectly. He sighed against Will’s mouth, one hand snug against the small of his back, holding him close.

Will replied with a hum himself, and just as his hands went to work Hannibal's tie undone, the door to the bathroom opened again, and he pulled back, a soft, almost whimsical, gaze locked onto Hannibal's.

"I'll have a look at that attic of yours, perhaps we can give you a private bedroom sooner rather than later," Hannibal smiled, then touched Will's hand on his tie, and turned to look at Simon, in super-hero pajamas, and socks.

"We've made a bed for you for tonight here, tomorrow, we'll have a bed for you," Hannibal assured the boy who picked up Doug and headed to the couch, his eyes reddened and swollen again.

"Okay," Simon whispered, and crawled in under the blanket, not looking at either of them, pulled in on himself. "I just miss my Mom right now."

Will gave Hannibal a knowing look, and then pulled away, to go to Simon. He called Rose over and let her up on the couch with them. "I bet you do. You know who is great as snuggles like moms are? Rose is. She loves it, and you know what? She gets scared at night and needs someone to be with her."

Simon wiped his cheek with one hand, and looked down at Rose, who snuggled up behind Simon's knees. She was a large dog, and took up the rest of the couch, easily, thrilled to have a little boy to cuddle.

Simon reached down, and pet Rose's ears. "She can sleep with me," he nodded, as Hannibal stood near the couch, and touched Simon's curls with one hand, which made Simon close his eyes.

"Losing your parents is very painful, I lost my own when I was about your age. It is alright to be sad, even if it is uncomfortable. Will and I are here, we are not about to leave you," he assured Simon.

Simon relaxed a little, and nodded that he understood, then smiled a little when Rose put her head on his hip, big, and heavy and comforting. "Okay."

"Sleep, We'll be just here in the same room," Will whispered, "I'll leave the light on over the stove so it's not completely dark."

"Okay," Simon whispered, his eyelids getting heavy as he started to breathe more slowly. Doug was already snoring against his chest, and it was a soothing, familiar sensation to which the boy clung.
Hannibal touched Simon's hair again and then brought another blanket from Will's bed to lay over his feet, and Simon's eyes closed with a heavy sigh, already out. Rose wagged, lazily, and licked at the air a few times, then closed her eyes as well.

"Quite the little trio," Hannibal whispered to Will.

"She'll be good for him, and him for her," Will whispered back, and moved into the kitchen to turn the stove light on, and then got out a small glass and poured up some whiskey.

Hannibal followed, and kissed the back of Will's neck, just between the collar of his faded shirt, and his curls. "I think so, yes. He had quite the appetite."

"Pretty decent sign he'll be… changing?" Will asked, looking down into his glass, and then raised it toward Hannibal. "Did you want some?"

Hannibal inhaled some of the whiskey scent, and nodded. "I'll have a little," he agreed. It was rough, but warm liquor, and no matter how cheap it was, how offensive to his palate, it was part of Will. He loved it, despite the protests of his own refined taste.

Will smiled and poured a little more into the glass, and then turned around, sipping a little of it and offered the glass to Hannibal. "I'll share."

"Sweet of you," Hannibal said, and swallowed a mouthful of the burning liquor with a little smile. "May I have a look at your attic?"

Will chuckled lightly, and gestured up the stairs. "We can take the drink with us."

"Very well," Hannibal whispered, and kissed Will on the lips, softly, then strode out of the kitchen to look at Simon and the dogs sleeping on the couch before he headed up the stairs, soundlessly.

Will followed after Hannibal, and up the stairs, silently, to the attic, though really it was an extra room he never used. "It's dusty up here."

The attic was a single, large, vaulted room panelled in wood that was so old that it was silvery and rough. Thankfully, Will did not seem to use it to store anything, it was utterly empty with a hardwood floor. "Yes, quite," Hannibal said, as he looked around.

Hannibal's keen eyes focused on the space able to see what it was, and what it could be just as clearly as he could see the perfect result of a surgical revision, or a meal yet to be cooked. He paced over the bare, wooden floors, and looked up at the lightbulb over their heads. "It has windows, thankfully," he noted, and ran his hand against a very old window casing that was strangely charming in its antiquity. "This window has never been replaced. I'm sure it still runs on a weighted system next to the casing," he mused, and unlocked, then opened it.

Sure enough, the window opened smoothly, and admitted cold night air. "And in good working condition. This space has potential…"

"Well I didn't buy a crappy house," Will said, shrugging. He touched the window gently, and looked out. Somehow he'd gotten out once in his sleep. "It's old but mostly in good condition."

"It will need a thorough cleaning, of course," Hannibal noted, as he took a breath of dust, but thankfully no mold in the old wood. Yes, this could do very nicely.

"You enjoy doing all that though," Will pointed out, sure he wasn't meant to feel bad for how his house was kept, he just never used this area.

“I do,” Hannibal chuckled, and reached over to touch Will’s waist. “It’s quite clean for an attic,” he reassured Will.

Will hummed at that and moved in closer to Hannibal, gazing up at him. Just a few days ago now Will had gotten out of the hospital, learned about Hannibal’s other self, and found out there could be another werewolf. Things went by in daze, but Hannibal was grounding. “I’ll help if I can.”

"I don’t think it will take long,” Hannibal said, and smiled at Will, still utterly taken by him. “Nor will arranging your things here. I can see it already in my mind’s eye.”

“What will I do with all that space in the living room now?” Will teased, lightly.

"Perhaps Simon will have some ideas,” Hannibal said with a smile, and pulled Will closer by his waist. “Perhaps a dining table?”

“In my living room? You don’t like it where it is now?” Will snickered playfully, and rested one hand on Hannibal’s chest as he downed the rest of his drink.

“We were sitting so closely at the very small table you have… which, I suspect, was never meant to be a dining table in the first place, that our knees were touching in the center,” Hannibal laughed, and cupped his hand over Will’s on his chest, watching him drink. “Not that I mind, but as Simon grows, that could prove awkward.”

Will smiled, a little timidly, gazing down at their hands. “Are you moving in, Doctor?”

Hannibal’s neck, then his elegant face colored at the suggestion, and he smiled. “Is that what you want, Will? A den that houses two wolves?”

“You’re… my pack, aren’t you?” Will asked, gazing at Hannibal up close, stilling cradling the glass in one hand, and holding the other against Hannibal heart.

“I am your pack,” Hannibal agreed, with a hard swallow at the feelings swelling in his chest. “You understand, this would mean some of my exceptionally fussy things would have to come with me…”

“Most of the stuff in this house isn’t mine. I own the books, the bed, some of the decorations, the rest can go,” Will said, giving up a very sacred part of himself to hold on to Hannibal, to keep him here with him and Simon.

Hannibal smiled softly, and nuzzled Will’s face. “Then yes, I will happily move here,” Hannibal whispered. He would make the long drive to meet his clients as often as needed, until he could move the practice closer. He could not imagine being without Will. Will was as vital as his own heart, living with him sounded like Heaven.

“You’re sure?” Will asked, setting the glass down on the window shelf, and wrapped both arms around Hannibal. He wanted him closer, to keep him close, to watch over him… Hannibal completed a part of himself that he never knew was incomplete.

“Yes, I’ve all but lived here since you became ill, at any rate. I would much rather sell the house in Baltimore and practice closer to Wolf Trap than own an abandoned house full of fine things that I never see,” Hannibal whispered, and kissed Will on the lips, warmly.

“Maybe…. I can get an extension put on the house,” Will offered, musing at the idea of making his tiny little place bigger for the three of them.

“That might be welcome,” Hannibal whispered, quite pleased at the thought of Will constructing something with his bare hands. “You would do it yourself?”

“Once my doctor clears me for work,” Will teased, knowingly. “Spring is coming, the snow will melt soon, it’ll be warmer out. Good weather.”

“I think you are well enough for some work, provided you rest when fatigued,” Hannibal said softly, and brushed his hand over Will’s hand, cherishing the callouses. “And, of course, provided you eat well.”

“I’m fairly certain there’s a certain someone moving into my house who will make sure I’m fattened up in no time,” Will chuckled, and leaned in to kiss Hannibal chastely.

Hannibal turned his head and kissed Will on the mouth, deeply and slowly. “There will be, soon,” he whispered against Will’s lips with a devilish smile. “And this will be *our* bedroom.”

Will gazed at Hannibal as their lips brushed and breaths mingled, a little smile on his lips. “ *Ours* ,” he promised softly, almost giddy. He’d never shared a home with anyone, never a roommate, never a significant other-- no one.

“Waking with you every morning will be the most beautiful view I’ve had since I left Italy,” Hannibal murmured, and kissed Will’s lips again. His heart felt like it was swelling. This was what he wanted, from the moment he arranged Will’s things, he wanted to live here with him, no matter how much smaller or less grand Will’s house was.

Will was giving up a lot of his simple life to have Hannibal with him, and that was a sacrifice he’d easily make. “Good. I’m glad we agree…”

“I promise, no chandeliers,” Hannibal said with a little smile in his warm eyes, mostly teasing Will, lightly. “A modest master bath would be welcome up here, however. It would spare us dressing to retreat to the shower together.”

“No?” Will laughed this time. “A bath up here? where?”

“Over … there,” Hannibal gestured to the far corner. “Surely that’s enough room,” he said, tilting his head to picture it.

“For a toilet and a small vanity maybe,” Will said, canting his head. It wasn’t a lot of space. “I might have to take some of the room here to make a shower if you wanted it?”

“A shower would be lovely,” Hannibal said, letting his vision for a bath in which they could soak together evaporate, sadly. “Just large enough to share…”

The house was older, Will would need to get someone to redo the pipes anyway, and while he was at it, he may as well just look into that addition. “Are you in a hurry for it?”

“Not especially,” Hannibal said, and snaked one long arm around Will’s waist, then brushed their lips together. “What, precisely, do you have in mind?”

“I’m going to have to remodel, is all, to get you what you want,” Will whispered, looking at Hannibal up close. “Classes are out in the summer, I can start really getting a lot done then.”

“You’ll be a handyman all summer? Really?” Hannibal asked, with a glimmer of bright interest in his eyes at that. “I would be willing to wait for your personal attention to the renovations, much better than having contractors in.”

“I don’t trust contractors,” Will murmured with a shrug of his shoulders. “I’ll hire who I need to do what I can’t though.”

“I trust your judgement,” Hannibal agreed, and nuzzled their faces together. After all, should they cause problems, there were wolves who had to eat…

“Good.” Will leaned in for another kiss, slowly.

Hannibal tipped Will’s head back with one hand, and tipped his head up, then sealed their lips together as he sighed into the kiss, holding it until his head spun. “Are you tired?”

“Not yet,” Will breathed, eyes half closed, “You could help with that.”

“A shame we do not yet have a bed up here,” Hannibal whispered, and bit Will’s lower lip, softly.

“What do we do about that?” Will asked, not sure he’d get the bed up the stairs without making too much noise. “Bathroom?”

“Outside?” Hannibal whispered, as he moved his hot, strong mouth down the side of Will’s throat, biting and sucking at his fragrant skin.

Will’s mouth dropped open with a groan, the thought was… insane, it was cold out, but the idea made his hard under his denim pant. Head lolled back, Will nodded, hands on Hannibal’s hips, guiding him toward the stairs.

Hannibal hurried down the stairs with Will, and glanced back at Simon on the couch, where he was still sleeping before he and Will made it out of the back door and toward the dark woods. It was cold, of course, barely spring yet, but Hannibal pulled Will into a feverish kiss the moment they were in the dark and kept their heated bodies together.

Will leaned against the side of the house, pulling Hannibal into him and then wrapped his arms around his shoulders to keep him there, kissing him with abandon. He’d never felt so… spontaneous before.

Hannibal undid Will’s belt, and pressed him against the trunk of a thick tree, heart pounding hard. Will’s fly and button were next, and in a moment, Hannibal had freed Will’s cock, and

was stroking him with one hand as they kissed. Hannibal's palm was hot compared to the cold around them, almost burning.

A groan escaped the empath's mouth, against Hannibal's pliant lips, and he started to undo the good doctor's pants, needing more skin-to-skin contact. He pushed the pants and underwear down, dragging Hannibal in closer by naked hips as they kissed.

Hannibal was already hard, and had been since they began kissing upstairs. He took them both in one hand, and stroked them together. "We'll have to cherish our moments of privacy where we can find them…"

"Depends on if he goes to public school or not, too," Will managed through gasps, inching fingers under Hannibal's shirt to feel out the fur and taut skin of muscle there, biting Hannibal's lip.

"Definitely something to consider," Hannibal gasped, and pressed Will's head against the tree with another kiss as he undid the buttons on Will's flannel shirt with one hand, in a hurry, then laid his palm over Will's thundering heart. "Wet me."

Will hummed and then dropped to his knees, mouth wet from the kiss, he wrapped his lips and tongue around Hannibal's already leaking cock, lapping off the precome there as he held fast to his thick thighs.

Hannibal's head fell back at the feeling of Will's tongue on his cock, and he twisted his fingers in Will's curls, tugging softly as he whispered his name over and over. His hips rose, slowly, pressing himself into the warm cavern of Will's mouth, starting to watch him with a moan.

A hum rattled through Will's mouth and against Hannibal's cock as Will took him down as far as he could, gagging himself once, and then did it again. His fingers wrapped around his balls, tugging gently.

"Will-" Hannibal gasped at the tug, and the feeling of Will's mouth enveloping him like that. It was enough to make his head spin with pleasure and the cold air against his skin feel hot. "Perfect…"

The light of the moon shone in Will's eyes as he gazed up at Hannibal, licking precome from the tip of his cock slowly, and then taking him down to the hilt one more time, before pulling off completely. Will picked up the bottle of oil he'd snatched from the house and lubed himself thoroughly.

Hannibal pulled Will up, and pinned him against the tree before he kissed his own taste out of Will's mouth, and lifted Will with one arm under each of Will's legs, bending the handsome profiler in half. His cock rubbed, wetly, against the cleft of Will's ass, then began to press into him, slowly. They were too riled and rushed for fingering, Hannibal knew Simon could wake and look for them at any moment.

Will had to relax, head lolling back against the tree, taking Hannibal in slowly, watching his eyes as well as he could see them. "Hannibal-" He gripped his biceps, toes curling as

Hannibal's cock pressed past the first tight rung of muscle.

"Breathe," Hannibal whispered, and kissed the underside of Will's jaw as he pressed into him, Will's saliva easing the way until he was buried inside Will's body, hip-deep, both of them panting in the cold air. "I love you," he heard himself whisper, the words tumbling out of his mouth against Will's throat.

Just as Will had breathed out, his breath hitched again on hearing the words, and kissed them out of Hannibal's mouth. "I love you, too."

Hannibal began to move inside Will with powerful, slow strokes of his hips, their faces brushing together as they screwed against the tree, too desperate for one another to wait until they had a bed in their own room. Hannibal hitched Will's legs over his elbows, and began to move more quickly so that their skin slapping echoed through the trees.

Shoulders to the tree, Will lifted his hips further to take Hannibal in with deep, pleasing groans. "Hannibal-" he gasped, the thrum of blood hot through his veins.

Hannibal spread Will's thighs as he began to fuck him now, his hips sped, slamming against Will's ass as their desire began to overwhelm their tenderness. "I need you-" he whispered in Will's ear, with a bite to the lobe.

Skin pressed tight into the tree bark, Will groaned, unable to feel the pain of it over the pleasure flitting through this body, daring to spill so soon. "You have me, all of me-"

Hannibal groaned at that, and bit Will's shoulder where his open shirt fell away from it. He growled into the bite, this was mating in the forest as much as it was ordinary sex. The smell of Will's skin, his precome, the scent of the soil and the fresh air was bringing out Hannibal's rougher instincts.

Will wrapped one arm around Hannibal's shoulders, holding him in, bent in half as he was fucked hard. He spread his fingers through Hannibal's hair at the nape of his neck and then grasped hard, holding his head there, so Hannibal's teeth sunk in deeper, to mark him.

Hannibal tasted the bright, vivid spark of Will's blood against his tongue and moaned, hips grinding his cock into Will harder and faster than ever, as though Will's blood spurred him on. "Will-" he gasped, roughly, able to feel himself start to wind tight inside.

Shaking hard, Will came and gripped Hannibal tightly as he did, gasping and panting against his ear, chanting his name as creamy white come sput out between them, mostly over his own stomach and chest. "Hannibal-"

Hannibal came inside Will, panting hard, shaking and sweating as he held Will tightly and dropped his face against Will's. He was speechless, soaring inside and utterly ruined as his muscles trembled from the force of the orgasm.

Will dropped his legs and then wrapped them all around Hannibal, his arms tight around him as well, holding him. "You're…. Something else."

Hannibal sighed, and nuzzled Will's face, slowly. "As are you," Hannibal whispered, against Will's lips, shaking a little with pleasure from head to toe. "You … are better than any dream."

"I should hope so," Will said, sighing contently, and kissing Hannibal once again.

Chapter 8

Chapter by beforethedawn, Destinyawakened

Over the next two days, Hannibal worked in the city, and arranged for a truck to move the items he was not going to put into storage to Wolf Trap. To his credit, it was only one truck. After he and Simon cleaned the attic and the guest room well, he had Simon bar Will from their work site, and astounded the boy by moving the heavy furniture up the narrow staircase to the two rooms, without assistance.

Hannibal promised that if Simon ate well, he would become as just strong.

Finally, on the third day, Simon found Will, and tugged on his shirt sleeve. “It’s ready.”

“Is it? I’m allowed to go look now?” Will asked, coming in from an early spring fishing session out at the stream. He set his poles down by the door and his catches in the sink of the mud room for cleaning.

“Yeah, my room and your room are done,” Simon nodded, with Doug cradled in his arms, who sniffed at Will’s clothes before Simon led Will through the newly empty half of the living room where Will’s bed had been. “So much space now…” he said, leading Will up the stairs to his bedroom, which he revealed by opening the door.

The room was charming, neat, and colorful, perfect for a little boy. Rose was already on the queen sized bed, claiming her spot with Simon, and wagged at Will when he came in. A bookshelf stood against one wall with a sturdy dresser from Hannibal’s place. The shelf was already filled with books and little curiosities, and Simon tacked a few drawings to his wall over the bed.

“This is nice. Did you help decorate?” Will asked, looking around the room, and then went to pet Rose’s head gently as he passed her.

“Yeah, this is Rose, and this is Doug,” Simon said, pointing at the drawings that Hannibal had found simple frames for, and hung in an artful cluster for Simon. “This is my old house, and this is my family…” he said, pausing as he looked at that one, and touched the glass. Hannibal said it was good to look at it, good to miss them, it was the way grief worked.

“This is the other dogs, and this is the woods,” Simon said, pointing to the pictures that seemed to lead toward a large, blank section of the blue wall that just waited to be filled with more drawings in the future.

“It’s great. You’re a good artist,” Will commented, one hand on Simon’s shoulder. “Lots of space for even more of your work.”

“Yeah, Hannibal says I can cover this whole wall, like a gallery,” Simon said with a little smile, and took Will to a little desk equipped with paper and lots of art supplies. “I can draw here, and it looks out the window, which is nice for drawing trees.”

“That’s a good idea. You like the view then?” Will asked, making mental notes on what renovations he needed to do for the house when the time came.

“Yeah, it’s nice, I like watching the squirrels in that tree,” Simon said, and pointed at an elm tree near his window. “Want to see the upstairs?”

Will glanced outside for a moment, and then smiled back at Simon. “Sure,” he replied, letting the boy lead him out again, and up the stairs.

Simon stopped to scratch at his ankle, and wiggled his leg. “So itchy,” he said over his shoulder, then leaned on the handrail as he started up the stairs to the attic. He opened the now polished door with a new, antique looking doorknob, and revealed the room to Will.

Hannibal had kept all of the old, weathered wood after it had been cleaned, and only covered it in a few spots with paintings, or a mirror here and there. The rustic nature of the room was embraced, not pushed away. Their bed, brought upstairs, was still very simple, and placed under the large window. Everything was a perfect balance of classic elegance, and rough, woodsy texture. The bed itself was covered with a simple, but very well-made quilt, and a large, luxurious fur blanket at the foot of the bed, which Buster laid on, sleeping.

Hannibal followed up the stairs, quietly, to witness Will’s reaction.

It wasn’t what Will expected it to be from Hannibal, quite pleased to see a lot of both of them here, living together in unison in one room. Will stepped in and touched the bedspread lightly, walking around it.

Hannibal watched Will explore the space he made, and smiled as he saw him touch the bed. “I used your bed, since you are quite attached to it,” he said, and smiled at Will.

“The frame you mean, the mattress was your doing,” Will pointed out, but smiled over his shoulder, boyishly, curls in his eyes. “The frame I’ve had for a while, through college. First thing I ever bought that was my own.”

Simon patted the frame, then let Doug lay on the fur blanket with Buster as he climbed on the bed to lay with them, snuggling and petting them both between bouts of scratching at his ankle through the bandages.

“It is still your own, but now shared,” Hannibal said, and stood near a beautiful, framed sketch of a statue that looked very, very much like Will. “I did not paint over the wood, once treated with the right oils, it’s strangely beautiful. I did put down two rugs, for warmth, over the floors.” Hannibal nodded at the two deep, colorful rugs that contrasted sharply with the greying, but strong floors, and yet looked like they belonged there.

Two wardrobes and two dressers finished off the room, with a small love seat and table at the far end.

“It’s perfect,” Will said, taking a seat on the other side of the bed to give Buster a belly rub, and then looked at Simon with a slightly knowing gaze, then to Hannibal. “Really, it is.”

Simon was curled up with the dogs, like one of them, snuggled right in.

Hannibal smiled at Will when he gave him that look, and walked to his side to touch his back. “I’m very pleased you like it. It’s a fine balance,” he said, with a soft kiss to his cheek, then looked at Simon. “Do you like that blanket?” he asked, amused.

“Yeah, fuzzy,” Simon nodded, comfortable against the fur like a cub snuggling his mother.

Will ruffled Simon’s hair and then looked up at Hannibal. “You’ve been busy.”

Hannibal made a mental note to get a blanket like that for Simon’s room, and smiled as he watched Will with Simon. “I have, yes,” he chuckled.

“He lifted the dressers BY HIMSELF up the stairs!” Simon exclaimed, with big eyes. “All I did was guide the end of it through the door. They’re heavy!”

“Is that right?” Will asked, leaning in toward Simon to whisper; “Do you think he has super powers?”

“Maybe,” Simon whispered back, which made Hannibal laugh, and flush a little before he leaned one shoulder against the wall.

“Perhaps I do. Perhaps you will, someday soon,” Hannibal hinted. “Would you like superpowers?”

“Yeah,” Simon nodded, decisively, like that was a silly question.

Will’s smiled faltered a little, realizing their family all canines, except for himself. He supposed someone had to wrangle them in, be the human, watch over them… “Could be fun.”

“Heroes often gain their strength from the bad things that happen to them,” Hannibal said, thoughtfully. “Perhaps the bad thing that happened to you might give you some strength,” he said, softly.

Simon moved closer to Will and scratched at his ankle, thinking about it. “Maybe…”

“Events in our life make us stronger,” Will agreed, putting a hand on Simon's back, rubbing it slowly.

Simon scratched his ankle again, and sat up to lean against Will’s side. “But not like … super strong, you mean strong on the inside.”

Hannibal removed his suit jacket, and undid his cufflink, then rolled up his sleeve. Beneath the arm hair, was a silvery, barely visible set of scars that only showed when they caught the light. “I was bitten once, too, when I was older than you are,” he said.

Simon’s eyes widened, “What bit you?”

“A wolf. A very bad wolf,” Hannibal said, and sat on the bed, letting Simon touch the scars, curiously. “The wolf attacked my little sister, and I fought it, trying to save her. I lived, but she did not,” Hannibal said, softly.

Simon’s small fingers traced the outlines of the ragged scars when he could make them out. “Do you still miss her?”

“Yes, every day,” Hannibal nodded, and set his jaw after swallowing hard.

Simon looked up at Will, “Did you get a bite, too?”

Will shook his head, mostly off in his own mind as he replayed what Hannibal said, able to see it clearly. “No. I'm … not like either of you.”

Hannibal gave Will an apologetic smile at that, and Simon looked back at Hannibal, touching his scar again. “This is how you got really strong? The bite?”

“It was a bite from a special, very rare kind of wolf. I think it might have been the type that attacked your family, and yes, it made me very strong, and sometimes very hairy,” Hannibal said with a little smile at Will.

“Wolfish,” Will explained, where Hannibal did not.

“Yes, wolfish,” Hannibal agreed, which made Simon squint at him.

“How … wolfish?” Simon asked, starting to put everything together, his body going tense.

Hannibal sat a little closer, and gave Simon a gentle, understanding smile. “The wolf that attacked your family was not an ordinary wolf. I’m sure you knew that just seeing what it could do,” he said, softly, having seen one tear Mischa apart. “It was a werewolf, Simon, a terrible one. Preying on children and families is a terrible thing to allow oneself to do, in any form. I am also a werewolf, not by choice, certainly. However, when the time comes, I take measures to make sure I do not hurt anyone who does not deserve to be hurt. Your family did not deserve to be hurt, nor did my sister.”

Simon sat very still, with his jaw open, and stared at Hannibal for a long moment, then looked back at Will, with wide, scared eyes. “I don’t want to be a wolf!”

Will offered the boys his open arms. “Of course you don’t. You want to be normal, carefree…”

Simon moved to Will, and let himself be hugged while Hannibal watched with a sigh. “It does not mean you have to harm anyone innocent, or take anyone’s family away from them, Simon. We can choose to be better than the wolves who turned us into what we are, we can improve the world by letting our wolves loose on the bad people who should not be allowed to disturb and harm others,” Hannibal said.

Simon hid his face against Will’s neck, shaking, and Rose whimpered, able to tell the boy was upset, she got up and licked Simon’s curly hair, trying to soothe him in a motherly way.

“I don’t wanna hurt anybody, I don’t want to be a monster!” Simon sobbed.

“You will not be able to hurt anyone for quite some time when you transform, Simon. You are a child, and you will transform into little wolf, a *cub* . You will not be a fully grown wolf until you are fully grown, yourself,” Hannibal assured Simon, who raised his eyes from Will’s wet neck, and blinked, then looked back at Hannibal, skeptically.

“You promise?” Simon asked, tearfully.

“Yes,” Hannibal nodded, with a soft smile, “you will be all but harmless for many years before you are fully grown. I will make sure that you have plenty to eat as a little wolf, and you will not have to hunt until you are ready.”

That seemed to calm Simon, to know he wasn’t going to turn into a slobbering, murderous monster when he changed.

“Will has seen me, as a wolf. Perhaps Will can tell you what I’m like when I change,” Hannibal prompted, able to see that Simon’s imagination was warped by what he’d seen on television and in movies.

“Hannibal is very kind, and gentle, when he wants to be,” Will said, honestly. “He has tawny fur that’s very soft, and he’s nice to cuddle with, much like the dogs.” Will nodded to Buster and Rose, who had followed them in, and was now at Simon’s side again.

Doug was still sleeping, and snoring loudly at Simon’s side. Hannibal smiled a little at the description Will had given him.

“He doesn’t hurt the dogs? I don’t want to hurt the dogs…” Simon whispered, petting Rose, who licked the tears off of his face.

“No, the dogs like him just fine,” Will answered, quietly, running a hand through Simon’s hair. “They know his scent now, they trust him, just as they will trust you and your scent.”

“Do you … ever kill people?” Simon whispered over to Hannibal, still snuggled against Will, where he felt safe.

“Bad people, yes,” Hannibal said, honestly. “I look for terrible people who seek to bully and hurt others when I am human. When I am a wolf, I seek them out, and eat them. I never hurt children, I will never take a good parent from their family, and I always try to eat the rude,” he said, with a charming smile. “Wolves are important to the environment. By picking off the weak and sick deer, they make an entire forest stronger. It is unfortunate for the deer, of course, but certainly not evil.”

Simon looked a little shocked, and swallowed, but thought it over.

“What kind of bad people?” he asked, tilting his head.

“I once ate a teacher who liked to hit her students and tell them terrible lies about themselves,

I attacked a politician who wanted to burn black people on a cross simply for their skin color, and much worse people, whose crimes you are too young to hear about just yet," Hannibal said.

Simon relaxed a little, Hannibal wasn't like the wolf who hurt his family, but he was still wary.

"Nobody was sad those people were gone?" Simon asked, thoughtfully, his curls falling into his eyes.

"No, not even one person," Hannibal assured Simon. "Monsters are real, Simon, but most of them are human. That is who I choose to feed myself with. Better a terrible person than an innocent deer…"

Will listened to them , stroking Simon's hair to calm him if he needed, but he could feel the boy was much more at peace with the idea now than he was moments ago. Still, this was all new news to Will, concerning Hannibal. "And the wolf that attacked your family is rude, we'll catch him and make him pay."

"Yes, we will," Hannibal promised, and touched Simon's shoulder, gently. "The world does not know that we are real, and they must not. They would capture us, and try to experiment on us, this is one reason why Will and I want you to stay with us so much. That, and we are fond of you," he said with a little smile.

Simon smiled a little, and leaned into Will's shoulder with a sigh, his mind reeling at all the new information.

"I don't want the bad wolf to hurt someone else," he said, quietly, looking at his hands, which Rose licked until he petted her head.

"We will not let him do that, Simon. I promise, and I always keep my promises," Hannibal said, solidly. "In turn, you must promise not to tell anyone what we've told you."

Simon nodded, and looked up at Hannibal with big, dark eyes, "I promise."

"It's for your own safety," Will whispered into Simon's hair, holding him close with one firm hand on his shoulder. "I'll do my best to catch this other wolf."

"We both will," Hannibal promised as Simon looked up at Will, and then himself, and smiled a little.

"Okay, thanks," Simon whispered, and petted Doug as he woke up and stretched. "Then maybe I can stop thinking about it coming here."

"I think it's natural to be afraid of that after what happened," Hannibal said, softly.

Simon nodded, and saw Doug sniff around the bed, then picked him up. "I'm going to take Doug outside," he said after a moment, and crawled off the bed.

“Okay, wanna let the others out, too?” Will asked, brows raised high into his hairline with a big smile over at Simon.

“Well, yeah,” Simon nodded with a little smile and ushered the dogs out with him as he headed downstairs, leaving the two adults alone.

Hannibal watched, and listened to Simon until he was outside with the pack of dogs. “It may take a few days to come to grips with his condition, but I think he will accept it well. Children are much better than adults in the face of sudden change.”

“You’re not worried he’ll have a… a freak out?” Will asked, quietly, voices low. “He seems okay now, but once he processes it all…”

“He may, but we’ll talk to him again, remind him of the reality of our situation. I’m sure he will have several moments of panic, but ultimately, I think he will eventually be at peace with what he is … what we are,” Hannibal sighed, and looked out the window at Simon, as he wiggled a stick around for the dogs, slowly, playing with them a little.

The attic looked over the grandest parts of the property, making it easy to keep an eye on Simon and the dogs. “I only hope when the time comes, I’ll be helpful.”

“I have no doubt at all that you will,” Hannibal said, and wrapped one arm around Will’s back with a sigh, then kissed his cheek. “It a difficult reality to accept, that he will never be normal again. Normality is important to a child his age.”

“It is. I guess that something neither of us were ever given the chance of for long,” Will sighed, leaning into Hannibal.

“No, and so, I think he will fit in nicely,” Hannibal said against Will’s hair, then kissed his scalp. “I should begin to make dinner…”

“Should you?” Will teased, and then pushed Hannibal down onto the bed and kissed him hard, leaning over him.

Surprised, Hannibal smiled against Will’s mouth, and kissed him back, deeply, then wound one leg around Will’s leg. “Do you have other ideas, Will?”

“Nothing that can’t wait until tonight I guess,” Will flirted, biting Hannibal’s bottom lip softly, and then lathed his tongue over it.

Hannibal sighed, and groaned when Will licked his lower lip. “What if I find myself too impatient to wait for tonight?” he whispered, as they sank into the mattress together.

“How will we keep sneaked away from our new son?” Will whispered, as if what they were planning were some secret, and honestly, maybe it was.

“Keep him occupied … somehow…” Hannibal whispered, and kissed Will’s perfectly pink lips as though he needed the contact to keep breathing. “Is there nothing outside he’d like to play with?”

“Just the dogs…” Will sighed, slowly kissing Hannibal as they breathed together, and then crawled over him, straddling his perfect hips.

“Perhaps they will keep him occupied,” Hannibal groaned, and arched his hips up, grinding slowly against Will as he stared at him. He’d lit the bedroom in anticipation of seeing Will like this in bed, and Hannibal was pleased to see that the light clung to Will in precisely the way he’d dreamed it would, rendering him ethereally gorgeous.

“Maybe,” Will said, able to hear them outside, laughing and barking. He kissed Hannibal slower this time, gazing down at him, rutting his hips down into his.

Hannibal reached up, and undid Will’s shirt, quickly, breathing harder as his large palms brushed Will’s chest, and neck. They were interrupted, however, by the sound of Simon running up the stairs. “Will!” he shouted up.

Will was mid kiss, teeth grazing Hannibal’s lip, and turned toward the sound and then quickly got up, doing up his shirt in haste, missing a few buttons. “Simon?” He went to the top of the stairs, and then down them quickly to meet Simon halfway. “What’s wrong?”

Hannibal groaned, softly, and watched Will do himself up and hurry to meet Simon. Simon was smiling. “There’s a new dog outside!” he exclaimed, bright-eyed.

“Oh…” Will sighed, giving himself a second get everything back down, and then went down the last few steps. “Where?”

“Outside in the trees, he has a rope around his neck and he looks hungry,” Simon said, hurrying to get outside to see if the shy new dog was still lingering around. “He’s yellow.”

Will grabbed his knife from the desk drawer in the living room and followed Simon out with a handful of dog treats. Sure enough, a beautiful orangy looking dog was standing there, dirty and cold looking, afraid. Will got down on his haunches and beckoned the dog over. “C’mere boy…”

Hannibal watched from the bedroom window with a heavy sigh as he realized Will would be busy for some time out there, and descended to the kitchen to prepare dinner. Hopefully, they could resume their christening of the bedroom later that evening.

The dog wagged a little at Will, but kept his distance, not sure about approaching him. Simon tilted his head, and moved a little closer, then sat down, without looking at the dog. “He’s nervous, maybe he’ll come if we don’t look at him.”

Will smiled, and set a few treats down and turned his back, just as Simon suggested. “That’s a good idea.”

A moment went by, then the new dog began to eat the treats, and a wet nose touched the back of Will’s neck. “He’s sniffing you,” Simon whispered, watching out of the side of his eye at the beautiful dog who was slowly getting used to Will.

“I thought he might be,” Will whispered back, and then gently set out another treat, this one in his hand.

The dog ran away again, into the trees, but within seconds, his feet padded toward Will, and he ate the treat out of Will’s palm, very gently, then looked at Will from the side, letting Will see him this time. “I think he likes you, he doesn’t have that … smell anymore,” Simon whispered.

“Fear?” Will asked, quietly, as he dug out another treat for the dog, and then reached to pet his head gently. “He needs a bath.”

The dog lowered his head, carefully, and let Will pet him as he ate. Simon moved, crawling over to let the new dog smell his hands before he pet him, too. “Yeah, maybe a bath…” Simon said, not sure what it was he smelled before that wasn’t there now, it had been strong, and … strange. “What should we call him?”

Will thought about that for a long minute and then smiled. “Winston. What do you think?”

“Yeah, Winston is a nice name,” Simon said, and petted the only member of their household newer than he was. “He’s going to be handsome, we should wash him off.” Simon sighed, then leaned closer to smell the dog after Winston smelled him. It just felt like the right thing to do, and Hannibal chuckled to himself from where he watched them in the kitchen.

Will laughed and stood, going to porch to get the hose and then found the tub and soap, a towel from the mud room, and the dog wash. “This should do it.” “Can I help?” Simon asked, the other dogs following behind the little boy as he followed Will. Winston seemed happy to follow Simon as well, still smelling his hand, like he wasn’t sure quite what Simon was.

“Of course. We need to convince him into the tub,” Will chuckled, and turned the hose on, that was connected to the sink inside the mud room, for warm water.

“Come on, Winston, come on, boy,” Simon coaxed, after petting Winston again, and stepped into the tub, and patted his knees. Winston followed him and sat down, obviously a well-mannered dog who was used to people. “We’re in.”

Will laughed and set the hose in the tub to fill with warm water. “Might want to step up,” Will said, “grab the shampoo there. I’ll wet him down you soap him up.”

“Okay,” Simon nodded, and stepped out of the tub, careful with his injured ankle, then poured shampoo over Winston’s back, and worked it into his fur after Will wet the calm dog. Dirt started to pour out of his coat, and into the water, and soon a beautiful amber tone was visible through the bubbles.

“He’s going to be kind of like a golden retriever, maybe?” Simon guessed, as he made a little pile of bubbles on Winston’s head, like a crown. Winston just sniffed at Simon’s nose, happy to be warm now, and petted.

“Maybe partial,” Will said, looking over the handsome dog. “Winston was a good name, huh?” Will started to rinse Winston off, and once clean, he turned the water off as well, and

got the towel.

“It suits him. He looks like a Winston,” Simon said as he watched Will dry Winston off with a little smile. “He smells better now, kind of sweet, like cookies,” the boy said, able to smell things in a different, deeper way than usual. “You’re sure he’s a boy dog, right?”

Will nodded. “Yeah, pretty sure,” he said slyly. He took the towel and helped Winston out to finish drying him off so he wouldn’t freeze.

“Well I don’t know, I didn’t look down there,” Simon replied, and went inside to get a towel, then came out with one to help. Winston seemed to enjoy the attention as the boy and Will dried him off, and leaned into their touches, wagging.

Hannibal came to the front door, and watched them, silently, with a smile.

Will looked up. “Sorry to tell you we have one more addition to the family.” He worked on Winston’s head as Simon did his middle and legs.

“Of course we do. He’s quite a handsome fellow. What’s his name?” Hannibal asked, and stepped forward to allow Winston to smell his knuckles and fingers, which Winston did with great interest, and then looked at Will as if amazed.

Will pet the new dog’s now dry head. “Winston. It’s fitting, we thought.”

“It’s a very dignified name,” Hannibal agreed, and opened the door to let Winston in, to meet the rest of the dogs who crowded into the kitchen at the smell of dinner. “Dinner is served, by the way.”

The dogs that had followed them out barked, following Winston inside, trailed by Will and Simon.

“Sounds great,” Will said, leaning to kiss Hannibal’s cheek on passing.

Hannibal closed his eyes at the kiss, and sighed, able to recall exactly what they were about to do before they were interrupted. All part of having a family, he supposed. Hannibal closed the door once everyone was inside, and watched as Simon found a new food bowl for Winston, talking to him as he did. “I saw Simon smell the new dog,” Hannibal said to Will, softly, amused. “Did he remark on his scent?”

“He did,” Will confirmed, slipping a hand around Hannibal’s trim waist. “He's getting used to it, I think.”

“We’ll see,” Hannibal said, and kissed Will’s cheek as Simon fed Winston, then all the dogs, since it was time, anyway. “His senses are heightened even more quickly than I would have thought.”

The table was set, complete with a tureen of delicious-smelling french beef stew in the middle of the small surface.

“Good or bad?” Will whispered, sneaking another kiss to Hannibal’s throat this time.

“Neither,” Hannibal sighed at the kiss to his throat, and sighed, deeply, “simply an observation. Hopefully, he’ll see that his condition comes with certain gifts…”

“He will have to see them first hand,” Will said, and looked at Hannibal evenly, seriously. “What are the chances Tier is our other wolf? You mentioned he might think he is, but what if he was?”

“He was fascinated by me, during our therapy,” Hannibal said, able to tell Will the entire story now. “He knew an astounding amount for a non-lycanthrope, and was able to guess at what I was. I denied everything, but he remained certain, and begged me to change him. I refused, of course, he was a child at the time. He stopped attending therapy shortly after. It’s possible he travelled, and found someone to change him, recently,” Hannibal sighed.

“Might explain the unsteady killing. Still unsure of his new powers,” Will offered, his own insight on the limited subject. “If he knows what you are…”

“Then he may attempt to confront me?” Hannibal asked, finishing Will’s thought. “I’ve thought of that. He is young and strong, it would be a difficult fight,” Hannibal admitted, and plated their food as he and Will spoke. “But I have *experience* ,” he said as he pulled a knife from a block, and shaved some fruit rind into curls with which to garnish the stew.

“That you are, but he won't expect you to be. If he knows we are investigating him and you're helping me, the chances are high,” Will said, palms on the counter.

“You’re worried,” Hannibal said, softly, and pulled Will’s chair out at the table, like a gentleman.

“Shouldn't I be?” Will asked, taking Hannibal his seat, and kicked out Simon's for him.

Simon was still with the dogs, petting Winston as he ate, making him feel at home. “Worry is a wise man’s reaction to danger,” Hannibal noted as he put the plates on the table, and brought a basket of warm bread. “I cannot say I blame you.”

Hannibal, however, seemed anything but worried.

“But you aren’t worried,” Will pointed out, reading Hannibal with ease. He stole a piece of bread and tucked a bit of it into his mouth to chew.

“There are very few things I invest energy into worrying over,” Hannibal said as he looked over at Simon, and called him to dinner, then sat opposite Will, and sipped the wine he’d poured for the adults. “If Randall Tier decides that he wishes to hunt me, I will confront him as a man, the state in which I’m certain he’d be at a disadvantage.”

“Unless he waits,” Will murmured around his bread, reaching for his wine.

“We shall see,” Hannibal said, as Simon joined them at the table after washing his hands, and sat in his chair.

“Winston is eating lots,” he said, and picked up a piece of bread, buttering it.

“Good, I bet he’s been abandoned and needs it,” Will said to Simon, glad to see the boy was eating regularly.

“Yeah, he ate all his food, and then I gave him a little bit more,” Simon said as he took a bite of his bread, and speared vegetables in the stew with his fork.

“I’m sure he likes you for that.” Will smiled and forked some of the veggies in his stew and then put them into his mouth with a hum, hungrier than he thought.

“I think he’s going to be a good dog, he’s really calm,” Simon said, as he ate around the thick pieces of beef in his stew, which Hannibal noted with a raised eyebrow and a watchful eye, but said nothing about it. “Even Rose likes him, she’s not afraid.”

“Rose likes just about anyone who seems nice,” Will chuckled, and noted the change in Simon’s eating habits, but like Hannibal, as nothing yet, but he did give the other man a sidelong glance.

“Do you not like stew, Simon? I’d be happy to make something else,” Hannibal offered, as Simon ate his carrots and potatoes, then looked up at Hannibal with big eyes.

“No, just eating…” Simon said, innocently.

“The beef is the best part, and you’ll need it be strong like Hannibal one day,” Will offered, nonchalantly, “But if you’d prefer to try another protein, that’s fine too.”

“I just …” Simon thought it over, screwing his mouth to the side. “I just don’t want to eat animals right now,” he said, quietly.

Hannibal just blinked at Simon, a little shocked, then looked at Will.

Will canted his head slightly, not sure of much he could offer Simon in terms of protein if he didn’t want to eat flesh. “No fish either?”

Simon looked up at Hannibal, shyly, then at Will, and swallowed his mouthful of bread. “Maybe fish … but I dunno,” he sighed.

“Simon, it’s going to be very hard to meet your needs without eating meat,” Hannibal said, sensibly. “Your body is undergoing rapid change, it needs fuel.”

“But I just … don’t want to eat animals. I don’t want to eat any of them, I think it’s mean,” Simon whispered, quietly, and set his fork down.

“Have you always thought this way?” Will asked, as he ate his own beef, no qualms seeing as when he hunted he was sure to use all of what he took down.

“No … but I don’t want to eat anyone now that I know that I might eat people. I don’t want to eat people,” Simon whispered, his eyes tearing up before he got up from the table and ran upstairs to his room.

Will watched Simon go, finding it best to let him be for the moment. He forked more food into his mouth and chewed, contemplating for a long moment. “Are there alternatives?”

Hannibal sipped his wine, slowly, and set the glass down with a sigh. “There are, but it would take an enormous amount of animal flesh to satisfy the needs of a werewolf in the same way that human flesh does,” Hannibal murmured, and pursed his lips in thought.

“Does he risk being out of control come the next moon if he doesn’t get enough flesh to eat?” Will asked, just wanting to help the boy and not have to wrangle him and Hannibal.

“At this age? No. As he gets older, however, if he does not bond with someone who can calm him, as you calm me, that is a serious risk,” Hannibal admitted, and shifted his jaw, then drummed his fingers against the table. “I had hoped to start him early, to teach him now to hunt with a clear conscience, as I do. That seems unrealistic, now…”

“For now. He may change his mind. He’s ten, don’t kids always change their minds?” Will asked, not exactly sure how children worked, he’d been an only child.

“Usually, yes,” Hannibal sighed, and stood after finishing his wine to go up to talk to Simon. “Shall we do our best to appease him?”

“Unless you want to starve him out, but I don’t think that’s going to look good to the social worker,” Will sighed, picking up his glass of wine for a taste.

Hannibal sighed his agreement, and filled a plate from the fridge with vegetables, fruit, cheese and bread, and poured a glass of milk with a shake of his head. “Indeed, not,” he agreed, and waited for Will before heading upstairs. “Perhaps you should knock, he’s more likely to answer.”

Will followed close behind, climbing the stairs and then knocked softly, waiting for Simon to answer.

Simon sniffled, “who is it?” He asked, quietly, through the door. “Who do you think?” Will asked back, trying not to laugh as he gave Hannibal a look.

Hannibal smiled to himself at the question, and watched as Simon opened the door, and wiped his face, then looked at them both, sheepishly. “Am I in trouble?”

“Not at all,” Will replied, motioning to the plate and glass of milk Hannibal had in hand.

“We want to be certain you eat something,” Hannibal said, and handed Simon the plate, which he looked at, and took to his little desk where he’d been drawing, and set it down, then looked back at them, both, and shuffled close to Hannibal to take the milk, and sipped it, then sat on his bed. “You do not have to eat people, Simon,” Hannibal explained, and walked in, to sit next to the boy. “It’s much easier to stay full, not to be weak for days afterward, but you could eat lots of animals that humans eat instead. You are young enough that it will not be an issue for some time,” he sighed.

“Do I have to eat humans ever?” Simon asked, with a set jaw, looking from Hannibal to Will with a furrowed brow.

Will offered Hannibal a look, wondering the same thing himself, honestly. When would Will being there not be enough and Simon would need someone to tame him, to calm him?

“Strictly speaking, no,” Hannibal sighed, and looked from Will to Simon, then smoothed down Simon’s blond curls with his hand. “We can feed you whatever animal meat you prefer. When you’re older and the cravings become stronger, we can ensure you transform far from any human, and provide you with the meat you need, even though it will leave you a little weak for a few days after you become human again.”

Simon brightened at that, and looked enormously relieved, then stood on the bed and hugged Hannibal around his shoulders with his little arms, which seemed to surprise Hannibal. Hannibal smiled, and hugged Simon back, gently, and rubbed his back. “Okay, thanks,” Simon said, as Hannibal exchanged a look with Will.

Will smiled with a shrug of his own shoulders. “It’s the best plan we can offer you.”

Simon hopped down and went over to Will to hug him, too. “Can I eat fish for a while?” he asked, still not sure he wanted to see real meat for a while, it was all so … much. So much had happened so fast and he just wanted to have a little while without being upset.

“If it bothers you to see meat for a while, we can do fish for now,” Will said, hugging Simon to him, holding him to let him know it would be okay, silently.

“Yes, we’ll manage with fish dishes for the time being,” Hannibal sighed, resigning himself to the challenge as the resident chef. “Perhaps you could help Will catch them,” he suggested, as Simon looked at him over Will’s shoulder.

“I’d prefer that,” Will said, touching Hannibal’s arm gently, turning to him. “It’ll take a lot of fishing to keep us all fed.”

“So it will,” Hannibal said, as he looked at Will. It was another compromise. He, of course, preferred red meat, but Simon’s huge, dark eyes were difficult to ignore. “If the two of you can catch them, I will prepare them as creatively as possible.”

Simon moved to the plate of food now, munching away where he sat in bed, obviously more hungry than he let on.

“No food in bed, please,” Hannibal said, and Simon took his plate to his desk, without ceasing to chew.

Will slid his hand to Hannibal’s lower back, standing close. “We will see what we can do, won't we Simon?”

Simon nodded with his mouth full of cheese, and swallowed, nodding. “Yeah, fishing isn’t bad, I’ll help.”

Hannibal smiled a little at Simon, and stepped closer to look at what he had been drawing when they came in. It was a picture of the black wolf, scribbled against a sea of red. Hannibal picked the drawing up, and tilted his head at it. “May I keep this, Simon?”

Simon blinked, confused as to why he would want to, but nodded, “sure.”

“We will leave you to your dinner, can you bring the plate down. When you're done?” Will asked the boy, hand on the door knob.

“Yeah,” Simon nodded, and shared a little piece of cheese with Doug, who grunted, happily.

Will walked out, taking Hannibal’s hand. Simon deserved some time alone to think over this transition a little more. They shut the door, and Will started back down the stairs. “I’ll clean up.”

“Thank you, did you have enough to eat? I fear meals without interruptions may be a thing of the past,” Hannibal said, as he slipped his fingers into Will’s.

“I’m good,” Will said, not too worried about himself. He squeezed Hannibal’s fingers tightly.

“I hadn’t prepared dessert, it may have gone to waste at any rate,” Hannibal mused as they walked into the kitchen together, greeted by Winston, who wagged his plumed tail and went to Will for attention.

Will dropped to his knees to pet the new dog. “Hey boy. He’s got a great coat. Hard to think he’s a stray…”

“He’s very striking,” Hannibal said, and offered Winston a bit of stew meat from a fork. Winston sniffed the meat, then took it, gently and shyly. “At least someone appreciated the dish,” Hannibal sighed.

Will gave Hannibal a look. “Did I not enjoy it?”

“Did you?” Hannibal asked, almost playfully as he began to clear the table.

“I did,” Will said, and got up again to help, as he said he would, and started the sink with soapy hot water.

Hannibal brought their dishes over, and scraped them clean before he set them in the water, and leaned closer to steal a kiss from Will as he did so. “Thank you, in that case,” Hannibal whispered, in a deep voice.

Will smiled against Hannibal’s lips as he washed, and pausing to be sure he kissed the other man thoroughly first. “Would be a waste if I didn’t.”

Hannibal closed his eyes as Will kissed him, and savoured the feeling of it, then leaned in and kissed Will again, more deeply this time, sucking on his tongue as he rested one hand against the small of Will’s back.

Will sighed contently, taking his hands from the suds and wiping them on the towel first, he gripped Hannibal by the shirt and kissed him hard, turning into his embrace.
Hannibal fisted the back of Will's shirt, and pulled him against his own body, hip to hip, and sucked Will's lower lip, slowly, tangling their tongues together as he lost himself in the feeling and scent of Will's body.

Humming, Will palmed down Hannibal's chest slowly, head canted to kiss him deeper, sliding tongues and clicking teeth in passionate haste. A low, deep, shaking groan answered Will's hum, and Hannibal's hand smoothed down Will's back to palm his ass, slowly. Their interrupted foreplay from earlier had left him on edge, needy, and eager for their next stolen moment. Will's hips rolled into Hannibal's as he quickly undid the doctor's shirt, fingers skimming over perfect chest hair.

Hannibal nipped at Will's lips, and fisted one hand in his hair as the other smoothed down the back of Will's thigh, and then up to his hip before Hannibal's warm palm slid between them, and rubbed against the bulge under Will's trouser fly. "It's been difficult to concentrate since we were interrupted…"

"The dishes can wait," Will stated between kisses and breaths, undoing Hannibal's shirt the whole way and palming down the revealed skin there.

Hannibal nodded as he pulled Will closer with his other hand, still rubbing Will's erection through the worn fabric of his pants, and kissed him again as he arched into Will's touch while their tongues tangled together. "Everything else can wait…"

"Upstairs?" the words was whispered as Will let out a soft, shaking moan, hips rolling forward into Hannibal's touch, needy.

"Yes," Hannibal gasped, breathing raggedly as he slipped Will's pants button undone with his fingers, able to smell how aroused Will was. He groaned at the scent, and pulled Will toward the stairs, still kissing him.

Will walked backwards up the stairs, to the attics, dragging Hannibal with him, their lips never parting. Once there, he kicked the door shut and locked it. "There…"

Hannibal pulled Will to the bed, and laid down, yanking Will over him, his motions much too possessed with urgency to be elegant at the moment. "Back where we began," he whispered, and almost tore Will's fly open as he pulled Will's pants down his thighs, then palmed him through his thin, worn almost to nothing boxers.

Will kicked off his boots and then his pants, the shirt came off over his shoulders, urgently. He kissed down into Hannibal's mouth as he undid his trousers and started to strip the doctor. "Like we never left."

It was as though they had never left, save for the sexual need that had only grown with every passing moment, like water beating against a dam, longing to plunge past it. Hannibal shifted his long legs, and stripped Will's boxers off of him with a groan into Will's mouth as he gripped Will's cock and stroked it.

Will undressed the doctor quickly, not without a few fumbles, and straddled his lap, pressing his hips forward into Hannibal's hand. "Hannibal…"

Hannibal would have closed his eyes with pleasure, if the sight of Will on top of him weren't so perfect. He pulled his hands away from Will only to let Will take his shirt off, and then replaced them instantly, caressing his way up Will's thighs, back to his cock. "You are … glorious," Hannibal sighed, then turned Will over in bed, rolling them both so that Will was on his back, this time. He kissed Will's throat, biting at pathways of superficial nerves to send shivers through Will's body as he worked his way down to his chest, his pert, pink nipples, which Hannibal sucked.

"So are you," Will moaned, hands carded now through Hannibal's ashen hair, tugging as he hit nerves and spots that set Will's skin on fire, blood boiling.

Hannibal's hair was silky, straight and smooth in Will's fingers, and he groaned as Will tugged at the strands. "Will…" he moaned, Hannibal's back flexing in powerful braids of muscle as he worked his way down Will's body. His teeth left red marks in their wake, flares of blushing skin and broken capillaries as proof of his passion.

Will groaned, hips arching against Hannibal's mouth, wantonly. "Please…"

"Please what, Will?" Hannibal purred, whiskey-brown eyes staring up at Will around pools of jet black pupil, Hannibal breathed against Will's cock, reveling in the musky scent and knowledge that he was torturing Will with promised pleasure.

"Take me, fuck me," Will heard himself saying, completely needy with lust.

Hannibal gasped, and nuzzled Will's cock slowly, then sucked the tip and pressed Will's knees to his chest. "Soon enough," he promised, and stroked his tongue around the outside of Will's entrance.

Will writhed at the sensation, warm and thick at once, slicking him from the inside out. "This… this is good, too…"

Hannibal moaned his agreement as he thrust his tongue deeper inside Will, spreading Will's cheeks with both hands. His tongue found the plentiful nerves that lined Will's muscle there, and exploited them with every drag and flick before he pulled back and crawled up Will's body, kissing his throat. "Would you rather I kept at it?" he purred, rubbing his cock against Will's wet entrance with a moan, barely holding himself back even as he enjoyed the moment of tension between what he wanted and what he had.

Will bit his lip, considering letting Hannibal go at it even still, but he wanted too much to let him go back down there now. "No, here."

Hannibal leaned up and bridged the distance between their mouths as he kissed Will slowly while he pressed into him with the girth of his cock, slowly, until he was past the beautifully tight ring of muscle of Will's ass. He moaned, and felt himself shudder with lust from his head to the tip of his spine as he wrapped both arms around Will, and held him tight.

“There-” Will murmured, gasping as he relaxed around Hannibal, taking him easier, to the hilt. Pleasure spiked through him, flushing him hot.

“My gorgeous Will,” Hannibal whispered against Will’s mouth as he filled him, rocking his length into the embrace of Will’s body as he clutched Will’s shoulders with both hands, to pull him down, over his cock, every time.

Will tugged on long strands of hair again as they kissed, sloppily, to the set rhythm of love making. His pleasure spiked as Hannibal’s cock pounded against his sweet spot, making the empath groan louder than he meant to do.

Hannibal loved the sounds Will made as much as he loved the feeling of Will squeezing around his cock, and the feeling of Will’s writhing limbs as they clung to him. “Will-” Hannibal moaned, losing himself in the passion of the moment as tears pricked his eyes at the beauty of it.

“Hannibal…” Will gasped, heat pooling at the base of his spine, his core on fire. He bit at Hannibal’s lips before letting his head drop back, mouth gaping in pleasure.

Hannibal let go of Will’s hips to slide Will’s slender legs over his shoulders, and began to pound into him, passionately, both of them breathless and sweating, filling the air with the sound and scent of their mating. Hannibal’s eyes were half-closed and dark with lust, and he began to moan, brokenly, pleasure tendrilling through his body to his spine where it pooled.

Will swore as his body contorted to fit Hannibal’s wants, hands now grasping bed sheets under him as he started to reel, coming undone in waves. “I’m… fuck… Hannibal.”

“Come for me, Will,” Hannibal moaned, the bed creaking under them as Hannibal lost control, and buried himself in Will, utterly lost in every aspect of being one with Will like this: the sweat, the scent of their skin, the way Will arched when he came, and the violent blues of his eyes under messy curls.

Will’s eyes rolled into the back of his head as he came, shaking and tense, squeezing tight around Hannibal’s cock as his own spurt between them as orgasm ripped through Hannibal’s body with a sweet, shaking heat that rendered him wordless, but moaning as he erupted into Will’s body in waves, then held him closer as he bent over him, panting against Will’s throat.

Will held Hannibal tightly as they rode out the pleasure waves, and then his limbs went slack and he breathed deeply to catch his breath. “I’ll never get tired of this…”

“Nor could I,” Hannibal whispered, with his nose against Will’s throat. He laid over Will completely now, hot and heavy as he hugged Will with both long arms, sated.

Sighing contently, Will wrapped both arms around Hannibal in turn, holding each other in their afterglow. “We’ll need to get up and make sure he goes to bed soon…”

Hannibal nodded, but made no motion to move, “In a moment, of course,” he whispered, too relaxed and happy to want to change a single thing.

Will enjoyed their peaceful moments while they could, of course, as having a near pre-teen in the house was bound to make things difficult, especially wolf cub. “Of course.”

“I will go make certain he’s tucked in,” Hannibal promised, and kissed Will’s lips, softly, then the slightly bruised side of his throat, gentle now where he had been demanding moments before.

“Good idea,” Will whispered, too distracted by Hannibal’s motions to think of much else, running hands over his bronzed skin, feeling him.

“You are making it difficult to want to leave the bed,” Hannibal chuckled. His eyes were closed with pleasure as Will touched him like that, he loved the feeling of Will’s calloused fingers and palms, and had since the moment Will pet him as a wolf.

They had been together a very short time, but in that short time they had gone closer than Will had ever been to anyone. A bond made that he knew would never break, as if the folklore story Hannibal told him on their first breakfast together had all been true…

“Then hurry back, I’m not going anywhere.”

Hannibal forced himself to get out of bed, kissing Will’s lips until he had to pull away at the last possible moment, and sighed as he began to dress again, slowly. “That is a blissful thought,” Hannibal murmured as he buttoned his shirt.

He kissed Will one more time, and headed downstairs once he was dressed, not certain if Simon may have heard them or not, and if he’d have explaining to do. Simon, however, was not in his room, nor was his plate of food.

Concerned, Hannibal headed downstairs, quickly, and remembered the sinking feeling he had the night Mischa snuck outside … the very last night she was alive. “Simon?” he called out, his adept mind was already meshing Simon’s small form in Mischa’s place where he’d found her, being ripped limb from limb by a wolf outside, like she was a toy.

Hannibal put his hand on the door to open it, and head outside, when a nose nudged his hand. Winston looked up at Hannibal with big eyes, and then trotted to the middle of the nest of dog beds in the living room. There, in the center, was Simon. Simon was curled up with the dogs in a big pile, fast asleep with an arm around Doug, and Rose’s belly under his head.

It was not often that Hannibal felt anything close to panic, or the cool wave of relief that crashed over him at the sight of the boy with his pack of dogs. Sure enough, Simon’s plate was off to the side, empty now. He was well fed, and happily snuggled in with the warm, breathing pile of protective dogs.

Hannibal took a photo, covered Simon with a blanket, and headed back upstairs to show Will.

“I thought, for a moment, he’d wandered out of the house,” Hannibal said with a soft smile, and showed Will the photo.

Will turned over in bed and looked at the picture with a smile. “He’s finding in comfort in the pack. That’s good.”

“Should we allow him to sleep there for the night? I gave him a blanket,” Hannibal said, watching Will’s eyes as he smiled at the photo of the boy and the dogs, all slumbering away.

“He’ll be fine. Can’t say I haven’t done that myself a few times,” Will explained, quietly, and pulled Hannibal back into bed, starting to strip him off his pajamas.

Hannibal chuckled, and let Will undress him, with a smile, then slid back into bed with Will, and took him into his arms with a happy sigh. “I’m sure it was adorable,” Hannibal said, then looked back at the door when Winston trotted in, to lay near the bed.

Will watched the new dog and then rolled so he was laying over Hannibal, gazing down at him. “I like the new room,” he admitted, honestly.

“Do you?” Hannibal smiled, and carded his fingers through Will’s hair as he gazed up at the stunning man who had captured his heart. “I’m relieved, I did my best to make it a blend of our aesthetics…”

“It’s wonderful. Homey.” Will kissed Hannibal’s jaw and then snuggled down against him, head resting in the crook of his neck.

“I’m glad you think so, did you expect crystal chandeliers and a chrome finish on everything?” Hannibal joked, snuggling Will against his side.

“I expected extravagance and elegance in a cabin, but I should have trusted you more,” Will whispered, one leg over Hannibal’s hip.

Hannibal seemed radiant at the praise, and kissed Will’s soft lips as he wound their legs together. “Words I will remember for the future…”

“And I will remember it when I make renovations, to get you the bathroom you want,” Will said, decidedly.

“Thank you,” Hannibal purred, smiling at Will. He smiled more at Will, and laughed more around him than he had smiled or laughed in a very long time. “I promise to put the shower in said bathroom to very good use, with you,” Hannibal smirked against Will’s lips, biting at the full, pink curves of them with a groan.

“I’ll hold you to that, Doctor,” Will flirted, pressing their lips together with a cant of his head, all but laying over Hannibal once more.

Hannibal pulled Will over him, completely, and relished the feeling of Will’s warm, bare weight on top of him. He cupped Will’s cheek with one large hand, and watched the light from the lamps on the bedside tables turn Will’s eyes from azure to lapis. “You may hold me to anything, and everything you like.”

Chapter 9

Chapter by beforethedawn, Destinyawakened

Weeks passed and Simon started to adapt better, though only fish was had for most meals, they were growing as a family. The full moon was coming up however and Will had to put the plans for the house on hold for a while to help prep Simon for the transition. That was, until the phone rang. It was Jack.

“I need you to be on call, if the killer really does only kill on the full moon,” Jack said on the other end.

“You want me to wait around all night for someone to be found dead?”

“A fresh trail is better than a cold one. If we find someone, I want to bring you in right away to point us in the right direction, and maybe we can catch him, this time,” Jack growled, obviously irritated with Will’s sass.

Will looked over at Hannibal and Simon in the kitchen, and sighed. “I’ll have my phone on.”

“Good. Hopefully, we won’t need you,” Jack said, and hung up, abruptly.

Hannibal looked over at Will, one eyebrow arched, “Everything alright?”

Will sighed and turned the volume up on his phone. “Jack wants me on call in case there’s a killing tonight.”

“Of course,” Hannibal said, as though that was expected. He shifted the pan in which he was sauteing some onions, expertly. He smiled over at Will, knowingly, “I have no plans to provide one, if you’re curious.”

“I’m not expecting one from you,” Will whispered as Simon stood nearby, cutting up some carrots for Hannibal.

“We shall see about our counterpart,” Hannibal sighed, and looked out the window with a relaxed gaze. “In the meantime, it is Simon’s first full moon. How are you feeling?” Hannibal asked the boy.

“Hungry,” Simon muttered, and stole a carrot to chew on while he worked.

“Eat all the fish you want,” Will reassured Simon, “now and later, we’ve got a lot.” Will just worried he’d been called away and wouldn’t be here to help them if they needed it.

“I will, when it’s done cooking,” Simon sighed, and looked at the raw fish Hannibal was working on.

Hannibal chuckled, “There is leg of lamb in the refrigerator,” he said. Simon looked tempted, but shook his head, and finished cutting the carrots.

“No, I’m going out with the dogs,” he said, and hopped down off of the chair he knelt on, to let himself out of the house with the dogs trailing after him.

“He’s restless, it’s common before a full moon,” Hannibal explained to Will, and watched Simon run around with a stick for the dogs to chase.

“I’m worried about being called away,” Will admitted, watching Simon, and then looked at Hannibal. “What if something happens?”

“If you are called away, I’ll take care of him,” Hannibal promised, and touched Will’s waist with one hand. “Wolves have been taking care of cubs for millennia. We’ll manage.”

Will was quiet for a long moment, staring at Hannibal up close. “What if he comes *here* ?”

Hannibal sighed, and brushed Will’s curls out of his face for him. “Then I will protect Simon, and if I can, kill Randall. It is just as possible he has become concerned about being caught and has left the area, for now.” Hannibal kissed Will, and turned to add the contents of the pan to the fish, and placed it in the oven.

Nodding, slowly, Will let it rest there, for now. There’s was nothing he could really do. Hopefully no murders were had tonight. “Okay.”

“If Randall does try to surprise us, it may be for the best.” Hannibal flipped the knife he held with one hand, and caught it, deftly, before washing it. “You could throw your old, silver-bottomed lamp at him,” Hannibal jested.

“Very funny, I already threw that lamp out. I didn’t need Simon touching it,” Will commented. Maybe he was overreacting, however. He folded his arms over his chest, hip to the counter.

“A shame, you might have kept it as a weapon,” Hannibal sighed, and kissed Will on the lips, softly, reassuring him. “Perhaps melted it down for bullets? You are a good shot, I’m sure. Silver bullets are a little cliche, but no doubt, effective,” Hannibal reasoned, and poured Will a short glass of whiskey after opening a small, expensive looking bottle.

He presented the glass to Will, with a sly smile, having procured the Irish whiskey as a gift to him, on their first full moon as a family.

Will took the glass and tried a sip. He hummed, licking his lips as it warmed him. “I had a knife made of it. My shot isn't that great.” Will tapped the sheathed know knife on his belt that had a wood handle, elegantly carved.

Hannibal raised his eyebrows at it, then touched the casing, and leaned in to kiss the expensive whiskey from Will’s lips, able to taste the wood of the barrels in which it was aged. “Let us hope it’s a blade you never need to use,” he whispered, and kissed Will again as the smell of dinner started to fill the kitchen.

“Never on you or Simon,” Will whispered quietly against Hannibal’s mouth.

“Of course not,” Hannibal whispered back, and nuzzled Will’s mouth as they listened to Simon laughing and running with the dogs outside. “Best to be prepared, however,” Hannibal whispered.

“I want to be able to protect you both if you need it,” Will said, knowing it was likely the other way around when it came down to it.

“I cannot say I have ever had anyone offer to protect me before,” Hannibal said with a touched look in his eyes, that were more amber-gold today than they usually were. “Even dark creatures need someone to watch over them, sometimes.”

"You’re all I have,” Will whispered and pressed that promise into Hannibal’s lips. “I’d protect and defend you against anything.”

“As would I, for you,” Hannibal said, ardently, staring into Will’s eyes before he kissed, him, then pulled back with a sharp look in his eyes and went to the window. Simon had stopped laughing, and more than one of the dogs was barking at something in the bushes.

Will immediately grabbed the knife from the sheath and was out the door quickly, knowing Hannibal was right behind him. “Simon?”

Hannibal moved quickly and burst out into the backyard. He picked Simon up, who was staring into the bush with a fixed expression. Simon gasped when Hannibal picked him up, and whistled sharply for the dogs to follow him inside.

Something moved in the brush, something tall.

Will watched them go back inside but walked up to the bush anyway, seething a little, hoping it might just be another animal, and now who he thought it might be.

Hannibal set Simon down inside, who was shaking from head to toe, frozen. “There was a man …” he whispered, and Hannibal laid a hand on Simon’s shoulder as Doug whimpered in Simon’s arms.

“Very well,” Hannibal said, and reached for a kitchen knife.

Will was waiting, as it seemed the man in the bushes was waiting to show himself, and he wished now he had done silver bullets instead. “Just come on. We know you’re out there.”

The bush shifted, and Hannibal stepped up, behind Will, a knife in hand. “I can smell him,” he said, with a growl in his voice as the sun sank lower in the sky, behind the trees now.

Eyes flitting to the skyline, Will took a deep breath. “He’s hoping to wait it out,” he said under his breath, “have you both change…”

“Best not to let us meet on even ground,” Hannibal said, and cracked his neck, then kissed Will on the lips, before he sprinted into the brush, fast, moving like an athlete as he

disappeared into the dense trees, blade glinting.

“Hannibal!” Will called after, shifting his way after the doctor, but as the sunset it got darker in the dense brush.

There was nothing but brush and trees for minutes, and then a slash of bright red blood against the trunk of a tree, like a flag. There, by the river, Hannibal threw the man against a rock, and lunged at him, the knife narrowly missing the man’s jugular as Randall Tier lunged out of the way.

There wasn’t much Will could do but watch, not getting between them now, he was afraid he might distract Hannibal, and in doing so, cause his injury or worse, death. He stayed low for the time, from the bushes, keeping his eyes peeled for an opening.

Tier was wearing gloves, heavy ones, and had something in his hands, something that glinted in the low light as he twisted around and tried to tackle Hannibal, around the waist. Hannibal drove the blade into Tier’s back, between his ribs, which elicited a scream from the man, then a grunt as Hannibal kneed him in the face and pushed him back, into the stream.

Hannibal waded in after Tier, and turned the knife in his hands before he moved to slash Tier’s throat. Before the blade could quite get to Tier’s throat, however, Tier pressed the thing in his glove against Hannibal’s arm. Hannibal gasped, and staggered back, holding his arm, and Tier leapt up, shouting unintelligibly at Hannibal. Tier slashed at Hannibal twice more while he was clutching his arm, and Hannibal lay on his back in the water, one hand over his face.

Will ran from the bushes as fast as he could, like a wild animal himself, and jumped at Tier, landing on him, the knife sinking down into the hollow of his throat. Tier gasped in surprise, so focused on wounding Hannibal that he dropped his weapon, and recoiled when Will stabbed him. Will held it there until blood spilled out into the river, tainting it.

Hannibal looked up, a large, red burn over his left eye. He saw Will through a blurry lens, and lunged after picking his knife up out of the cold water. He lunged, and slashed Tier across his stomach, which brought Tier to his knees. Hannibal yanked the knife out, as Tier clawed at Will’s arms. “His heart!” Hannibal said to Will, “the silver in his heart-” he gasped, stabbing Tier in the lung.

Silver in the heart was the way to kill a wolf for certain, and irreversibly.

Tier’s nails were like claws, gashing Will’s arm as he took the knife out and slid it into his heart, all but striking the man dead right there.Tier’s eyes went wide as the sun set, and his pupils snapped to pinpoints when the blade slid into his heart. He wavered, and then fell forward, into the stream, lifeless as the water washed dark, almost black blood over stones while the moon slipped out, from behind the clouds. Will let go, waiting until Tier stopped thrashing and took the knife out. There was no way he’d explain this to Jack.

Hannibal was panting, and smiled at Will, both of them covered with blood. “You did perfectly,” he whispered, and sank to his knees in the water, his back starting to arch as his nails grew, curved and sharp in the water.

“Hannibal…” Will sighed, watching the moon come out over head, and then back to Hannibal. “Simon!” Will ran back to the house to find the boy.

Hannibal grunted and arched, the places where Tier had slashed at him with the silver in his hand burned and bubbled as he transformed on the bank of the stream, but it was quick, thankfully, and he limped to the house, after Will.

Inside the house, the dogs were whimpering, and Winston pawed at the door before Will got to it, eager for his help inside. Simon was nowhere to be found, as a human boy, and in his place, in a pile of his clothing was a fluffy, shaking, golden brown wolf cub.

“Oh,” Will sighed and went to scoop the cub up his arms, nuzzling him. “Got you.”

The cub whimpered, and let Will pick him up, shaking hard as Will held him. He blinked eyes that were amber, like Hannibal’s, and whimpered as he looked at Will’s face, then licked at his beard, softly.

The back door opened with a push, and the large, injured wolf ambled in, slowly, then laid on the floor as the dogs crowded around him, sniffing at his wounds. Will walked over and placed Simon down with Hannibal, and then got up again to find the medical kit, under the sink. He opened it and scrounged around for what he could use, hardly a doctor.

Simon sniffed at Hannibal, able to recognize him, instantly, and laid against his side. Hannibal laid an arm over Simon, and closed his eyes. His left eye looked burned shut, his leg, near his paw was bubbling and burned, and a spot on his chest smoldered through his long fur.

Will found some salve and started to rub it over the burn wounds, not sure what else to do, working around the cub, both of them seemingly docile, at least for now. “It’s gonna be okay…” he whispered.

Hannibal raised his head to look up at Will, and nuzzled Simon’s head before he licked Will’s hand, cleaning Randall’s blood off of Will’s skin for him. His wounds hurt, of course, but he hadn’t been wounded mortally.

Simon raised his head to sniff at Will’s hand, and helped clean the blood off, then jumped to his feet and started to search for food, pawing at the fridge before he started to bite the door, trying to wrestle it open as his stomach roared.

Will went and washed up and then pulled the door open to the fridge to see what it was Simon finally wanted. “Finally hungry?”

Hannibal laid on the floor, resting, and let Rose lick his head, with supreme patience as Simon tried to climb Will’s leg, and whimpered urgently, licking his chops before he scrambled to climb into the fridge, and clawed at the leg of lamb on the lower shelf.

Chuckling, Will got the lamb out and unwrapped it. He took it to the living room with cub in toe, and set it down near Hannibal and let Simon go at it. “Well, at least he eats like he should as a wolf.”

Simon pounced on the leg, and started to tear chunks of meat from it, eating hungrily as he tried to hold the enormous piece of meat with his front paws. Hannibal wagged, lazily, and huffed at Simon, proudly, watching the little cub feast.

Will tore some off for Hannibal and offered it to him with his fingers, letting his other hand pet down his soft fur, still amazed that the wolf he'd been so attached to was Hannibal after all.

Hannibal leaned up and took the meat from Will, very carefully, and ate with a relieved sigh to get some nutrition into his exhausted body. Simon burped, softly, already half-way through the leg, and Hannibal gave the fridge and then Will a hopeful look.

"I'll see what I can find," Will said, not prepared to feed a wolf who was this hurt, but he was sure he could find something. Then, he blinked once, an idea dawning on him. He walked out of the house and ran toward the river bank where Tier had washed up, and dragged his body back to the house.

Hannibal smelled it when Will dragged their kill close to the house, and Hannibal limped through the door, and nuzzled Will with deep gratitude before he hunkered over the body and sunk his teeth into the man's throat, tearing it out with a snap of his jaws.

It only seemed the best to get rid of the body and feed the wolves all at once. Will started to strip Tier's clothes off and took them out back and tossed them into a garbage can, added some gasoline, and lit a match. He tossed the match in and watched it burn ablaze.

Simon dragged his lamb leg onto the porch and watched as Hannibal tore into the man. His injuries only seemed to make him hungrier, and he ate as though he had been starving for months, ripping flesh off of Tier's bones in long strips that he gobbled down.

Simon finished his lamb leg and waddled over to Will, pawing at him, again.

Will watching the flames and looked down at simon, crouching to his level. "Hey," he whispered, reaching to pet the cub.

Simon snuggled against Will with a heavy sigh, and watched Hannibal eat. It was a vicious, grizzly scene. Hannibal's long, white teeth ripped sheet after sheet of meat from Tier, then feasted on his insides. It wasn't long before there was nothing but bones left, an hour later, and Hannibal chewed on one, crunching it between his back teeth before he licked out the marrow, and finally, stood up.

He looked more energized now, his open eye brighter, and he managed a slow stretch before he walked to the fire to find Will, licking the blood from his jaws as he limped.

"Better?" Will asked, looking at the bones left. He'd have to find a way to get rid of those, too.

Hannibal nudged against Will, softly, then licked at his hands and leaned against his legs, eyes closed. He was tired now, sated, but badly injured, and needed to rest until sunrise.

Meanwhile, Simon, who was low on energy himself after his first transformation, laid against Will's chest. It was almost a docile scene if it weren't for the body laying on the grass.

Will picked up the cub and brought him into the house with the dogs, letting him snuggle with them, and then went out to heave Hannibal into his arms, and took him inside as well. He laid him out on the couch and covered him with a blanket. "Just rest…"

Hannibal grunted when Will laid him on the couch, and closed his eyes, then stretched his injured leg out toward Will, reluctant to let him go far. It had been a violent night, far worse than he had expected, he wanted to sleep the rest of it away now that he had eaten his fill.

"I'll be back," Will said, going to dispose of the remains the best he could, for now. Will disappeared outside and came back an hour later, shucked off his boots and curled up behind the wolf on the couch, arm carefully around him.
Hannibal opened his eyes to see Will close to him, and closed them with a heavy sigh. Simon was snoring heavily in a nest of dogs on the floor. All was well, for the moment. He tucked his head against Will's, and gave him an adoring look, as much as he could with one eye, and one that hardly opened just yet. Grateful did not begin to express the way Hannibal felt toward Will, not only to be accepted, but defended, and protected.

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

> This is it for this fic, we hope you all loved it! There might be revisiting of this later, but until then, please kudo, comment, and raise awareness of our lovely fic on TUMBLR! by reblogging it!

Hannibal opened his eyes to find himself on the couch, aching but not ravenous as he had expected to be. He sat up, slowly, a little disoriented, and looked around before he stood. He looked for his family as he slipped on a pair of pajama pants left over the back of a chair near the couch. It was easier to walk on two legs with an injured arm than to limp on four.

Simon was already off of the floor, upstairs, in his room with most of the dogs, asleep. Hannibal touched his hair, and smiled softly. Simon's first moon had been tumultuous, certainly, not what he expected. He managed to bend down to give Simon's forehead a

fatherly kiss.

Simon had not been hurt, Will had not been hurt, that was what was truly important.

Will was up and busy around the kitchen, making bacon, eggs, and pancakes. He let the two get up on their own, food would be ready when they were hungry. Pills were set out with a glass of water at Hannibal's spot.

Hannibal walked back downstairs slowly, and noticed the pills. He took them with the water, and walked into the kitchen. "Good morning, Will. How are you feeling?"

"Rested. You?" Will asked, flipping a perfect pancake that had blueberries in the batter.

Hannibal wrapped his arms around Will from behind, hugging him tightly as he rested his chin against Will's shoulder, then kissed his neck with a slow smile. "Rather sore, but relieved, and well-fed. You were marvelous," Hannibal whispered, his palm over Will's heart as he held him tightly.

"That mean you don't want pancakes?" Will asked, skirting off the compliment as he flipped the pancake onto a plate, glancing over his shoulder at Hannibal.

"I won't say no to breakfast," Hannibal hummed, and met Will's blue eyes, welcome and familiar. "It smells wonderful. Were you scratched last night?" he asked, looking at Will's hands as he cooked, then buried his nose in Will's curls.

"A few, from his claws," Will explained, his arms bandaged over with salve, just in case.

"He didn't bite you, did he?" Hannibal asked, with concern as he touched Will's bandaged wounds, moving around to his side to look at him as he spoke, his barely-there brows coming together.

"I don't think he did," Will said, a little concerned. "A scratch won't… turn me will it?" He put in more batter for the pancakes, trying to steady his hands.

"Not unless saliva entered the wound while he was turned, or almost turned," Hannibal said, and watched Will's face, curiously. "Are you … worried?"

"Who… would make sure you were cared for if I got turned?" Will asked, not afraid of it, but afraid of the routines they were creating.
Hannibal brushed Will's curls out of his face, and considered the question. "We are sufficiently far from the city that if we wished to subsist on animal flesh, I'm certain we could. We would manage, as wolves," Hannibal whispered, and smiled a little at the thought, fond of the feeling, no matter how fleeting, of all of them being … the same. "You would make a stunning wolf."

"I'm sure I'm fine though," Will said, but smiled at Hannibal for the compliment and then watched his pancake cook, bubbles forming over the top.

“I’m sure you are,” Hannibal said, confidently, and kissed the side of Will’s delicate ear. “Thank you, by the way. I have never owed another man a debt of life, but I am pleased to owe my life to you.”

“You don’t owe me anything,” Will said and turned to kiss Hannibal properly once he turned the pancake.

Hannibal smiled against Will’s lips, and cupped his face with both hands, then kissed him more deeply. If anything, he felt more bonded to Will than ever before, deeply and profoundly. “My life is yours, regardless. I cannot imagine my happiness without you,” Hannibal whispered, as though the thought was one of the very few things that actually frightened him.

Will sighed, contently and reached to the turn the stove off, and then kissed Hannibal deeper, passionately. “You did scare me though.”

Hannibal smiled softly, and rested their faces together. “For that, I apologize. I was alarmed when I saw you struggling with him, but then you sliced his throat,” Hannibal smiled, and whispered the words, romantically.

“I did what I had to do,” Will whispered, knowing it wasn’t the best choice, “I took care of the remains after you… had your fill.”

“Thank you,” Hannibal whispered, and kissed Will’s lips again, unable to get enough of him. Will had watched him feast, watched him transform … and here he was, making breakfast, kissing Hannibal with love. “I admit, I was … not certain how you might react to seeing me transform, or feed.”

“It was… beautiful,” Will admitted, simply, gazing at Hannibal. “Horrifyingly beautiful.”

Hannibal’s eyes glazed over with love, and he managed a breathless smile. “Which part?” he whispered

“All of it. You're… majestic and fierce. There is no other way to describe what I saw,” Will explained quietly, and kissed Hannibal again, softly.

“I never thought I would be fortunate enough to be seen for what I am, and loved for it,” Hannibal said back, against Will’s lips, his injured arm wrapped around Will’s shoulders to keep him close.

“Perhaps I am what you suggested when we first met. What was it called, that wolf charmer?” Will asked, smiling against Hannibal’s mouth.

“The wolf charmer, yes. You’ve certainly charmed *me*, at any rate,” Hannibal whispered, against Will’s lips as he stared into his blue eyes, transfixed.

“The only wolf that needs charming in my opinion,” Will chuckled, and kissed Hannibal soundly again.

Hannibal felt his blood pump a little harder through his veins at the kiss, and held Will more tightly, folding him in his arms, to his chest as their mouths melded. Will hummed, gripping Hannibal tighter, only the sound of the fireplace going in the other room.

Hannibal could hear Will's heart, the sound of his breathing. It was a symphony. He dipped Will back with his good arm, and sucked at his lower lip, then wound their tongues together like a serpentine lock.

"I love you," Will panted between the kisses, keeping their mouths close together, never parting, always touching.

"I love you, more than I ever thought my heart was capable of loving anyone. You are as central to it as the strings and flesh that make it beat," Hannibal whispered, between brushes of their lips.

Will felt as though they were meant to be, meant to have found each other, no matter how much he used to not believe in fairytales and folklore, or wishes of being happy. "Good."

They had a fairy tale of their own, albeit a dark one, spattered in blood. Hannibal would change nothing at all about it, especially the blood, and Will's acceptance of it. "I was fated to find you, I picked up your scent far off it the woods that night, and followed it for miles. It grew stronger and stronger, and I fell a little more in love with the strange blend of your sharp aftershave, stale coffee, and the warm, irreplaceable scent of your skin beneath it all."

"Fated," Will echoed the back with an easy, clearly in love, grin. "I believe that."

Hannibal traced his thumb over the curve of Will's lower lip with a soft smile. "Drawn into each other's orbit like magnets, until we met."

Will kissed Hannibal's thumb and then ran his teeth over the pad softly. "Completely possible.

"Wolves mate for life," Hannibal reminded Will, happily, and hopefully. "I'm sure you understand what that means…"

Eyes lighting up, Will smiled, almost gleefully. "I have no plans on letting you go."

"I never imagined you were the fickle sort," Hannibal said, with a smile in his eyes.

"You're stuck with me," Will warned, and rested their heads together, intimately.

"Until death," Hannibal said, and cupped Will's face with both hands.

"'til death."

***

Another month passed by, quicker than Will imagined it might, and without the killer showing his face the last time, Jack was a little more lenient. Will settled into their routine,

this time without a hitch. The wolves were well fed before turning, and they managed snuggles together as a family before dawn, when Will’s phone rang.

The empath picked it up, going into the kitchen to do so.

“Looks like our guy took a month off to throw us, Will. We've got another murder. Another family. The Leeds. I need you come take a look.”

Will sighed as his blue gaze flitted over his family. “I'll be there as soon as I can.”

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